

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR ROUND

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A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. RIDING AT ANCHOR.

THE intention, one of the first which Marian Creswell had expressed after her marriage, and one which had so incensed Gertrude, of converting the girls' music-room into a boudoir, had long since been carried out. Almost immediately after he had returned from his wedding trip, Mr. Creswell had sent to London for decorators and upholsterers. An army of foreign artists, much given to beard and pantomimical gesture, to humming scraps of operas over their work, and to furtively smoking cigarettes in the shrubberies whenever they could evade the stern eye of the overseer, had arrived upon the scene; and when they returned to town they left the music-room, which had been a bleak, gaunt, cheerless apartment enough, a miracle of brightness and cosiness, elegance and comfort. Everybody was astonished at the change, and the young ladies themselves were compelled to confess that the boudoir, as it then appeared, was perfectly charming, and that really, perhaps, after all, Mrs. Creswell might have been actuated, apart from mere malevolence and spite, by some sense and appreciation of the capabilities of the room in the selection she had made. There was a good deal of actual truth in this judgment; Marian had determined to take the earliest opportunity of asserting herself against the girls and letting them know the superiority of her position; she had also intended, if ever she were able, to gratify the wish to have a room of her own, where she might be absolute mistress, surrounded by her books, pictures, and other

belongings; and by the acquisition of the music-room she was able to accomplish both these intentions. Moreover the windows of the music-room looked out towards Helmingham. Half-way towards the dim distance stood the old school-house, where she had been born, where all her childhood had been spent, and where she had been comparatively innocent and unworldly; for though the worship of wealth had probably been innate in her, and had grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength, she had not then sacrificed others to her own avarice, nor forfeited her self-respect for the gratification of her overwhelming passion. In a person differently constituted, the constant contemplation of such views might have had an irritating or a depressing effect, but Marian's strength of mind rendered her independent of any such feeling. She never thought with regret of the step she had taken; she never had the remotest twinge of conscience as to the manner in which she had behaved to Walter Joyce; she was frequently in the habit of passing all the circumstances in review in her mind, and invariably came to the conclusion that she had acted wisely, and that, were she placed in a similar position again, she should do exactly the same. No; she was able to think over all the passages of her first and only love—that love which she had deliberately cast from the pedestal of her heart, and trampled under foot—without an extra pulsation of excitement or regret. She would pass hour after hour in gazing from her window on distant places where, far removed from the chance of intrusion by the prying villagers—who, however, were profoundly ignorant of what was going on—she would have stolen interviews with her lover, listening to his fond words, and experiencing a kind of pleasure such as

she had hitherto thought nothing but the acquisition of money could create. Very tranquilly she thought of the bygone time, and looked across the landscape at the well-known places. She had slipped so easily into her present position, and settled herself so firmly there, that she could scarcely believe there had been a time when she had been poor and dependent, when she had been unable to exercise her every whim and fancy, and when she had been without an elderly grey-haired gentleman in constant attendance upon her, and eager to anticipate her very slightest wish.

One afternoon, about eight months after her mother's death, Marian was sitting at the window of her boudoir, gazing vacantly at the landscape before her. She did not see the trees, erst so glorious in their russet garments, now half-stripped and shivering in the bitter autumnal wind that came booming over the distant hills, and moaned wearily over the plain; she did not see the little stream that lately flashed so merrily in the summer sunlight, but had now become a brown and swollen foaming torrent, roaring where it had softly sung, and bursting over its broad banks instead of coyly slipping through its pebbly shallows; she did not see the birds now skimming over the surface of the ground, now rising, but with no lofty flight, the harbingers of coming storm; she did not see the dun clouds banking up to windward; nor did she note any of the outward characteristics of the scene. She was feeling dull and bored, and it was a relief when she heard the handle of the door turned, and, looking round, saw her husband in the room.

There was nothing of palpable uxoriousness—that most unpleasant of displayed qualities, especially in elderly people—in the manner in which Mr. Creswell advanced and, bending over his wife, took her face in his hands and kissed her cheek; nor in the way in which he sat down beside her and passed his hands over her shining hair; nor in the words of tenderness with which he addressed her. All was relieved by a touch of dignity, by an evidence of earnest sincerity, and the veriest cynic and scoffer at the domesticity and what Charles Lamb called the "behaviour of married people," would have found nothing to ridicule in the undisguised love and admiration of the old man for his young wife, so quietly were they exhibited.

"What made you fly away in that hurry

from the library just now, darling?" said he. "You just peeped in, and were off again, never heeding my calling to you to remain."

"I had no notion you were engaged, or that anybody was here!" said Marian.

"I am never engaged when you want me, and there is never anybody here whose business is of equal importance with your pleasure."

"When did you cultivate the art of saying pretty things?" asked Marian, smiling. "Is it a recent acquisition, or one of old standing, which had only rusted from disuse?"

"I never had occasion to try whether I possessed the power until you came to me," said Mr. Creswell, with an old-fashioned bow. "There, oddly enough, I was talking about speaking in public, and the trick of pleasing people by public speaking, to those two men when you looked into the room."

"Indeed. Who were your visitors?"

"I thought you would have recognised old Croke, of Brocksopp; he seemed a little hurt at your running away without speaking to him; but I put him right. The other gentleman has corresponded with you, but never seen you before—Mr. Gould, of London. You wrote to him just after poor Tom's death, you recollect, about that sale."

"I recollect perfectly," said Marian. (She remembered in an instant Joyce's allusion to the man in his first memorable letter.) "But what brought him here at this time? There is no question of the sale now?"

"No, dearest; but Mr. Gould has a very large practice as a parliamentary agent and lawyer, and he has come down here about the election."

"The election? I thought that was all put off!"

"Put off?" repeated Mr. Creswell. "Indefinitely? For ever?"

"I'm sure you told me so."

"Now that is so like a woman! The idea of an election being quietly put aside in that way! No, child, no; it was postponed merely; it is expected to come off very shortly."

"And what have these two men to do with it?"

"These two men, as you call them, have a great deal to do with it. Mr. Croke is a leading man amongst the Conservative party—that is my party, you understand, child—in Brocksopp, and Mr. Gould is to

be my London agent, having Mr. Teesdale, whom you know, as his lieutenant, on the spot."

" You speak of 'my party,' and 'my agent,' as though you had fully made up your mind to go in for the election. Is it so?"

" I had promised to do so," said Mr. Creswell, again with the old-fashioned bow, " before you did me the honour to accept the position which you so worthily fill; and I fear, even had you objected, that I should scarcely have been able to retract. But when I mentioned it to you, you said nothing to lead me to believe that you did object."

" Nor do I in the very smallest degree. On the contrary, I think it most advisable and most important. What are your chances of success?"

" Well, on the whole, good; though it struck me that our friends who have just gone were a little too sanguine, and—at least, so far as Mr. Croke was concerned—a little too much disposed to underrate the strength of the enemy."

" The enemy? Ah!—I forgot. Who is our opponent?" Mr. Creswell heard the change in the pronoun, and was delighted.

" A certain young Mr. Bokenham, son of an old friend and contemporary of mine, who was launched in life about the same time that I was, and seemed to progress step by step with me. I am the younger man by some years, I believe; but," continued the old gentleman, with an odd, half-sheepish look, " it seems curious to find myself running a tilt with Tommy Bokenham, who was not born when I was a grown man!"

" The position is one with which age has very little to do," said Marian, with a slight hardening of her voice. " No, if anything, I should imagine that a man of experience and knowledge of the world had a better chance than a young and necessarily unformed man, such as Mr. Bokenham. You say that your friends seemed confident?"

" A little too confident. Old Croke is a Tory to the backbone, and will not believe in the possibility of a Liberal being returned for the borough; and Mr. Gould seems to depend very much on the local reports which he has had from men of the Croke stamp, and which are all of the most roseate hue."

" Over-certainty is the almost infallible precursor of failure. And we must not fail in this matter. Don't you think you your-

self had better look into it more closely than you have done?"

" My darling one, you give me an interest in the matter which previously it never possessed to me! I will turn my attention to it at once, go into the details as a matter of business, and take care that, if winning is possible, we shall win. No trouble or expense shall be spared about it, child, you may depend; though what has given you this sudden start I cannot imagine. I should have thought that the ambition of being a member's wife was one which had never entered your head."

" My head is always ready to serve as a receptacle for schemes for my husband's advancement, whether they be of my own, or his, or other people's prompting," said Marian, demurely. And the old gentleman bent over her again, and kissed her on the forehead.

What was this sudden interest in these election proceedings on Marian's part, and whence did it arise? Was it mere verbiage, pleasant talk to flatter her husband, showing feigned excitement about his prospects to hide the real carelessness and insouciance which she could not choose but feel? Was she tired of his perpetual presence in waiting upon her, and did she long to be rid of her patient slave, untiring both in eye and ear in attention to her wants, almost before they were expressed? There are many women who weary very speedily of suit and service perpetually paid them, who sicken of compliments and attentions, as the pastry-cooks' boys are said to do, after the unrestricted gratification of their tart-appetites, in the early days of their apprenticeship. Did she talk at random with the mere idea of making things pleasant to her husband, and with the knowledge that the mere fact of any expression of interest on her part in any action of his would be more than appreciated? Not one whit. Marian never talked at random, and knew her power sufficiently to be aware that there was no need for the expression of any forced feeling where Mr. Creswell was concerned.

The fact was—and it was not the first time she had acknowledged it to herself, though she had never before seen her way clearly to effect any alteration—the fact was that she was bored out of her life. The golden apples of the Hesperides, gained after so much trouble, so much lulling of the dragon of conscience, had a smack of the Dead Sea fruit in them, after all! The money had been obtained, and the position had been

compassed, it was true; but what were they? What good had she gathered from the money, beyond the fact of the mere material comforts of house, and dress, and equipage? What was the position, but that of wife of the leading man in the very narrow circle in which she had always lived? She was the centre of the circle, truly; but the circle itself had not enlarged. The elegant carriage, and the champing horses, and the obsequious servants were gratifying in their way; but there was but little satisfaction in thinking that the sight of her enjoyment of them was confined to Jack Forman, sunning himself at the ale-house door, and vacantly doffing his cap as homage to her as she swept by, or to the villagers amongst whom she had been reared, who ran to their doors as they heard the rumbling of the wheels, and returned to their back parlours, envying her her state, it is true, but congratulating themselves with the recollection of the ultimate fate of Dives in the parable, and assuring each other that the difference of sex would have no material effect on the great result. Dull, cruelly dull, that was all she could make of it, look at it how she would. To people of their social status society in that neighbourhood was infinitely more limited than to those in lower grades. An occasional visit from, and an occasional dinner with, Sir Thomas and Lady Churchill at the Park, or some of the richer and more influential Brocksopp commercial magnates, comprised all their attempts at society. The rector of Helmingham was a studious man, who cared little for heavy dinner parties, and a proud man, who would accept no hospitality which he could not return in an equal way; and as for Dr. Osborne, he had been remarkably sparing of his visits to Woolgreaves since his passage of arms with Mrs. Creswell. When he did call he invariably addressed himself to Mr. Creswell, and did not in the least attempt to conceal that his feelings had been wounded by Marian in a manner which no lapse of time could heal.

No! the fact was there! the money had been gained, but what it had brought was utterly insufficient to Marian's requirements. The evil passion of ambition, which had always been dormant in her, overpowered by the evil passion of avarice, began, now that the cravings of its sister vice were appeased, to clamour aloud and make itself heard. What good to a savage is the possession of the gem of purest ray serene, when by his comrades a bit of

glass or tinsel would be equally prized and appreciated? What good was the possession of wealth among the inhabitants of Helmingham and Brocksopp, by whom the Churchills of the Park were held in far greater honour, as being—a statement which, though religiously believed, was utterly devoid of foundation—of the “*raal owd stock?*” The notion of her husband's election to parliament gave Marian new hopes, and new ideas. Unconsciously throughout her life she had lived upon excitement, and she required it still. In what she had imagined were merely humdrum days in the bygone times she had had her excitement of plotting and scheming how to make both ends meet, and of dreaming of the possible riches; then she had her love affair, and there had flashed into her mind the great idea of her life, the intention of establishing herself as mistress of Woolgreaves. All these things were now played out; the riches had come, the old love was buried beneath them, the position was attained. But the necessity for excitement remained, and there was a chance for gratifying it. Marian was pining for society. What was the use of her being clever, as she had always been considered, if the candle of her talent were always to be hidden under the Brocksopp bushel? She longed to mix with clever people, amongst whom she would be able to hold her own by her natural gifts, and more than her own by her wealth. To be known in the London world, with the entry into it which her husband's position would secure to her, and then to distinguish herself there, that was the new excitement which Marian Creswell craved, and day by day she recurred to the subject of the election, and discussed its details with her husband, delighting him with the interest which she showed in the scheme, and by the shrewd practical common sense which she brought to bear upon it.

Meanwhile the relations existing between Mrs. Creswell and her recently acquired connexions, Maud and Gertrude, had not been placed on any more satisfactory footing. They lived together under an armed truce rather than a state of peace, seeing as little of each other as possible, Marian ignoring the girls in every possible way, except when they were perforce brought under her notice, and the girls studiously acting without reference to any supposed wishes or ideas of Mrs. Creswell's. Mr. Creswell followed his wife's lead exactly; he was so entirely wrapped up in her and

her doings that he had no eye nor ear for any one else, and he would probably have been very much astonished if he had been told that a complete estrangement had taken place between him and the other members of his family, and would positively have denied it. Such, however, was the case. The girls, beyond seeing their uncle at meals, were left entirely to their own devices, and it was, under the circumstances, fortunate for their future that their past training had been such as it had been. Gertrude, indeed, was perfectly happy; for although Mr. Benthall had not actually proposed to her, there was a tacit understanding of engagement between them. He occasionally visited at Woolgreaves, and during the summer they had met frequently at various garden parties in the neighbourhood. And Maud was as quiet and earnest and self-contained as ever, busied in her work, delighting in her music, and, oddly enough, having one thing in common with Mrs. Creswell—an interest in the forthcoming election, of which she had heard from Mr. Benthall, who was a violent politician of the Liberal school.

One day the girls were sitting in the room which had been assigned to them on the establishment of the boudoir, and which was a huge, lofty, and by no means uncomfortable room, rendered additionally bright and cheerful by Gertrude's tasty handiwork and clever arrangement. It was one of those close warm days which come upon us suddenly sometimes, when the autumn has been deepening into winter, and the reign of fires has commenced. The sun had been shining with much of his old summer power, and the girls had been enjoying its warmth, and had let the fire out, and left the door open, and had just suspended their occupations—Maud had been copying music, and Gertrude letter-writing—owing to the want of light, and were chatting previous to the summons of the dressing-bell.

"Where is madam, this afternoon, Maud?" asked Gertrude, after a little silence.

"Shut up in the library with uncle and Mr. Gould, that man who comes from London about the election. I heard uncle send for her!"

"Lor, now, how odd!" said unsophisticated Gertrude; "she seems all of a sudden to have taken great interest in this election thing!"

"Naturally enough, Gerty," said Maud. "Mrs. Creswell is one of the most ambi-

tious women in the world, and this 'election thing,' as you call it, is to do her more good and gain her higher position than she ever dreamed of until she heard of it."

"What a curious girl you are, Maud! How you do think of things! What makes you think that?"

"Think it—I'm sure of it. I've noticed the difference in her manner, and the way in which she has thrown herself into this question more than any other since her marriage, and brought all her brains—and she has plenty—to uncle's help—poor, dear uncle!"

"Ah, poor, dear uncle! Do you think madam really cares for him?"

"Cares for him? Yes, as a stepping-stone for herself, as a means to the end she requires!"

"Ah, Maud, how dreadful! but you know what I mean—do you think she loves him—you know?"

"My dear Gerty, Marian Ashurst never loved anybody but one, and—"

"Ah, I know who you mean, that man who kept the school—no, not kept the school, was usher to Mr. Ashurst. Mr.—Joyce. That was it! She was fond of him, wasn't she?"

"She was engaged to him, if the report we heard was true, but as to fond of him! The only person Marian Ashurst ever cared for was—Marian Ashurst! Who's there?"

A figure glided past the open door, dimly seen in the waning light. But there was no response, and Gertrude's remark of "Only one of the servants" was almost drowned in the clangor of the dinner-bell.

VILLAGE LIFE IN BENGAL.

OUR Bengalee village is almost as quiet in the hot weather as the water of the river on whose bank it is situated. Time was when it was the channel of a stream of commerce as mighty as the torrent which swells the river in the rains. Then, the road on which it stands was the highway for goods passing down the country to the great port of Calcutta. Now they are sent by an iron road which passes at a distance from our streets. The inhabitants seem to live in an eternal hot weather of fortune. Like their own paddy-fields, when shorn of their crops, they have a dry, poor, parched-up appearance. The large buildings, ghauts, temples, and houses are tumbling to decay; luxury has fled the spot; cleanliness dwells only with the poor. And, truly, in spite of its mud walls and thatched roof, an Indian hut is one of the cleanest habitations that you could discover in a journey round the world. The

materials used in its construction could not be brought to a higher state of polish. Look at the smoothness of its clean floor. There is not a grain of dirt on it. It looks as bright and smells as fresh, as the floor which an English housemaid has just scrubbed. In yonder corner stands the cause of this immaculate purity. A broom, a mere bunch of finely-split bamboo, without handle, the common jarun, every Indian housewife's daily companion.

But the interior of the hut gives other evidence of the vicinity of the presiding genius of the broom. For see how neatly she has ranged her pots and earthen vessels on the floor against the wall. Some are elevated on a wooden shelf. On removing the saucer, or piece of cloth laid on the mouth of each jar to preserve its contents from the dust, and also from the rats and vagabond dogs of the village, we discover, in some, various kinds of grain; in some, oil or ghee; in one or two, a few of the good woman's trinkets—for even Hindu women have trinkets. In many cases their whole fortune is laid out, not in shares or doubtful securities, or in the Three per Cents, but in jewellery, ornaments, and gold or silver robes. The whole interest of a Bengalee woman's heart and soul, be she rich or poor, centres in her wardrobe. Jewels and dresses are her ambition, the subject of all her talk. Her gossip sparkles with them. They clothe all her ideas. Her thoughts are heavy with the weight of the ornaments they have to carry.

The household lamp stands in yonder niche in the wall. It is a common earthen saucer, or bati, containing oil, with a lip in which reposes a piece of cotton. The receptacle in which it is placed, resembling a niche in one of our cathedrals, appears to have been made for the figure of an idol. Our host's bedroom furniture is all contained in one article, a bed. This bed, or charpoy, is made of stout string lashed to an oblong frame of wood, supported on legs of about a foot in height, and affords a very cool and easy couch.

The possessor of all this wealth, the respected occupier of the neat dwelling, is a tiller of the soil, as appears from the two or three implements of husbandry which are hung on the beams of the roof. A rough plough, as rude as when Adam first turned ploughman, a short-handled hoe, and a sickle, comprise his stock in trade. Yet most probably he is a tiller of his own soil, a landed proprietor, his estate covering perhaps half an acre.

An Indian hut possesses a most offensive and disagreeable exterior. The back-yard generally contains what may be called a mud dust-bin, a receptacle for all sorts of filth and rubbish, a place never covered over and scarcely ever cleansed. On one side of the house—we are now at the entrance of the village where the houses are a little scattered—is a pool of liquid death and abomination, or a mass of rank vegetation, concealing within its leaves noisome fevers and awful agues; or a dried-up tank, its sides slippery with slimy plants, its bottom covered with heaps of rubbish, dead

animals, and all foul and obscene matters. On the outside of the hut, or around the tank, there is perchance a clump of trees, perhaps plaintain trees, or palm trees, starting up from a thick impenetrable jungle, the shelter of many a deadly snake, and often the half-way house of a leopard out for the day. The sides of the cottage are stuck all over with dark patches, which, at first sight, one is apt to consider as a national species of ornament, but which, on a closer inspection, one perceives, as well through the sense of smell as through that of sight, to be cakes of prepared cow-dung, placed there in a wet state to bake in the heat of the sun for subsequent use as fuel. In the early morning, scarce a fire is alight in the village, but towards evening you will be able to judge of the application and effects of this abominable preparation. Then, as you return from your evening walk, and make short cut through the narrow streets to your house, you become sensible of a gradually increasing thickness in the atmosphere; a smell as of a stale dunghill becomes more and more evident to your nostrils; your lungs become by degrees slower and slower in their working, your breath more and more heavy; a smarting in your eyes, slight at first, grows more and more intense. From every door, every crevice, between every straw that composes the thatch of every house, from every narrow passage and confined alley, from every hole, corner, nook, or cranny, from every open space, square, court-yard, or thoroughfare, steals a thick, impenetrable, heavy, peaty smoke. A smoke that no well-bred senses could endure. A smoke that, slowly rising from the fires which the villagers are now lighting with these vile brown cakes, gradually envelopes the whole village, temples, houses, and trees, in one thick, dark, odorous, blinding canopy. A smoke that fairly smokes you out, and makes you run, with the fear of suffocation, for dear life, till you have left the village and its nocturnal covering far behind.

In the early morning the air is fresh, pure, and clear; the rays of the sun give a genial, not too intense, warmth, and everything is sparkling with life and activity. The village has been astir for some two hours, and as we pass on towards the bazaar we are amused with the bustle of the preparations on all sides for the business or pleasures of the day. A great deal has been written about "the Indian maiden, who, with her pitcher poised on her head, advances with all the modesty of maidenhood, yet with the dignity of a queen, to the village well; grace beaming forth in every movement of her upright and well-defined form," &c.; but an Indian maiden at a distance, with her ghurra, or water-pot, on her head, looks like a walking pillar; while on a closer view, her garments generally prove to be very dirty, and too scanty, or, if ample enough, too lazily put on. However, here are several specimens for you to judge from, in all degrees of undress, cleanliness, and proximity; for the whole population of the village is occupied in performing its morning toilette, and men and

women exhibit various degrees of progress in that absorbing ceremony.

Numbers pass us, men and women, singly or in groups, going to, or returning from, the river. The women, some with their clothes still dripping on their shoulders, some with naked infants toddling by their sides or carried astride on one hip, all with their long black hair wet and hanging down their backs. In the low verandas of many houses on either side of the street, we see men at their toilette. Some, squatted on the ground, are studiously consulting a looking-glass, and doing up their hair for the day, with as much care and precision as an English lady bestows on her own auburn locks. Some, whose religion allows them to retain but a scant amount of hair, having soon completed their hair-dressing, are chatting with their friends, exchanging greetings with those of the passers-by whom they happen to know, or passing round from mouth to mouth the morning bubble-bubble. In one verandah, the village barber is shaving his customer's hair according to the peculiar articles of his religion, producing an effect which inclines one to believe that he has placed a cup on the top of his patient's head, and shaved off all his hair but that covered by the vessel.

If you look down the street, you may see a crowd collected round a gentleman, who, from the cut of his coat, and the want of cut in his hair, which comes a considerable way down his shoulders, appears to be "the missionary." It is he, and the crowd are listening attentively and respectfully to his matutinal discourse. He preaches there in the same spot every morning, and is always honoured with a considerable and intelligent audience.

In another minute we reach the ghat, or landing-place. The steps leading down to the river are crowded. People are busily ascending and descending. Old men and women, lads, lasses and children, are all collected here. All ages of both sexes are taking their morning bath, exchanging greetings, holding a lively gossip, or carrying on a gentle flirtation as they take a dip and come up to the surface again. When they have brought their business and their pleasure to a satisfactory conclusion, the women fill their ghurras (which during their ablutions they have left to float about on their own account), raise them on their heads, or carry them supported by one arm against their sides, and make their way slowly home. This is the Hindu woman's meeting-place. The ghat is her rendezvous, her Rotten-row, her promenade; and the early morning is the fashionable hour. In another hour the ghat will be deserted. The morning toilette, at least that part of it which is performed at the river, will be completed; the gossip and latest news will be exhausted; the day's supply of water will have been fetched; and the groups will have broken up.

Even at this distance from the bazaar you can hear the hum and bustle of trade, the discordant street cries, and the shouts of eager bargainers. A "native" never speaks in a mo-

derate tone of voice, unless he has mixed much with English people. Every word he utters is delivered with the full voice and dramatic pitch of an orator. This is the bazaar, corresponding to the High-street of an English country town. It is a narrow street, with scarcely sufficient room for two of the country carts or hackeries to pass each other, thronged with natives, and lined on either side with low houses, in the verandas of which, on a level with the road, are displayed the various goods for sale. Many a shop appears to be a pedlar's box on a large scale, exhibiting a multifarious assortment of those trinkets and gewgaws so prized and admired by our country folk. Or it might be a stall in a fair, for its contents are formed of small looking-glasses, tin-cups, money-boxes, glass, jewellery, plates for good boys, penny trumpets, moving dolls, and a jumble of childish trumpery. At the cloth merchant's, or linendrapier's, you may purchase fabrics from every loom in Europe, but you will find an extremely limited stock of Indian goods. The village shoemaker's productions bear a very brown-papery appearance; and the confectioner's pastries and sweetmeats might be set before any English schoolboy without much fear of his being tempted to indulge his appetite to an injurious extent. The fruiterer shows but a small and very uninviting selection of fruits. Bunches of plantains and bananas, heaps of cocoa-nuts, a few insipid vegetables, and bags of dried peaches, figs, almonds, and raisins. Numberless are the grain merchants, their many-coloured seeds spread out in heaps or stored in earthen jars. Butchers, poulters, and dairymen have no existence in our bazars; they reside in the more sequestered hamlets, away from the bustle of the town, and have no regular establishment, retaining their stock in the raw state of nature, until required for the spit or the pot. Jewelers, and gold and silversmiths, though they have shops in the bazaar, make no display of their goods; but keep their bracelets, brooches, and other ornaments carefully packed in tin boxes ranged by their side as they sit at work. The hubbub and confused noise of the street is distracting. Naked, pot-bellied children are running about, shouting and playing, or, squatted on the ground, are amusing themselves in the manufacture of that world-wide production, a mud-pie. Several goats are straying up and down, jocosely butting at interfering passengers, or returning the caresses of old friends. The thoroughfare is too crowded to be the ordinary resort of Pariah dogs; but there are one or two specimens of that degraded race sneaking down the street, casting a wary glance on either side to avoid the missile which they momentarily expect, and which, when it reaches them, they receive with a howl and a quickened flight. Offensive alike to the eye and the ear is the Pariah dog. He is a sneaking, mean-spirited animal, with a coat and a snout like those of the jackal, and with a language evidently borrowed from, if not a dialect of, that employed by his untamed relation. His infernal howl or snarl corrupts the tongue of any Anglo-

Indian dog, however thorough-bred, after a short residence in the country, and changes his full-mouthed aristocratic bark into a quick sharp snarl, or a squeaky whine. Yet he deserves pity, for his lot is a hard one, and after a life of abuse and misery, he generally ends his days in starvation. Flies swarm on all sides. Their chief resort is the pastrycook's, but they range from store to store, from store to animal, from animal to man, in a perpetual dance to their own monotonous music. The natives do not seem to mind them, and allow them to remain on their bodies without attempting to brush them off. At the upper windows, or on the roofs of the houses, are women engaged in household duties. Purchasers and sellers on all sides seem trying to drown one another's voices, in the eagerness of their bargaining. Endless are the lies they indulge in, and wonderful is the coolness with which they contradict themselves. They live in an atmosphere of deceit and over-reaching, and a lie is to them more natural than the truth. In buying, the rule is never to give more than two-thirds of the price demanded. The heaps of mud and rubbish collected at the side of the road are awaiting removal in the scavenger's cart. For our village boasts a municipal committee. And yonder is the dustman going his morning rounds with his neat little cart, in the shafts of which is yoked—a mighty proof of the advance of English influence—the sacred white Brahmin bull. Here is the tobacconist's. He himself is seated among his wares, proving their virtue and recommending their adoption to all passers-by who are inclined to believe the evidence of their own eyes, by smoking his morning pipe. Strings of hubble-bubbles, and a few hookahs, the latter of various degrees of elegance and taste, adorn his shop. Every mouth in the village knows the taste of a hubble-bubble. Men and women all smoke; children of four or five years old, and of both sexes, know how to draw the vapour through the hole of the cocoa-nut, and can puff it out of their mouths with the meditative calmness of an old smoker. Thus we reach the end of the bazaar. And not too soon, for at its further end an excited Brahmin bull, as yet a stranger to our municipal dust-cart, and still rejoicing in the freedom of his sanctity, is beginning to run a muck down the crowded thoroughfare. Tossing up his heels and standing on his head, as though he were going to perform a succession of summersaults all down the street, away he goes, helter-skelter, into the confectioner's, smashing all his vessels, and reducing his elegantly devised pastries into a shapeless mass; while the unfortunate shop-keeper, not daring to lift his hand against the sacred animal, views the havoc with dread and submission, scarce raising his voice to drive the frolicsome creature away. But away he soon goes, not caring to surfet on sugar and flour, and plunges his head into the first grain merchant's he reaches. Here he is in a few minutes secured by some of the most adventurous of the sufferers, and led away to be let loose in the fields outside the village.

Some of the houses in the street we have now entered, are built of brick. The side they present to the road, with its bare, blank face, pierced only at a great height from the ground by a few very small windows, gives but an unfavourable impression of internal comfort; we enter the narrow wooden doorway, and find ourselves in a large, open court-yard. This court-yard is surrounded by a verandah, behind which are several rooms, like dens for wild beasts, to judge from their barred windows and padlocked doors. Above the verandah are two or three stories of rooms, both better ventilated and more accessible to the light and air. The pillars of the verandah, the frames of the windows, the walls, perhaps even the court-yard itself, are decorated with various designs in bright and gaudy colours. The rooms contain, with the exception of a few extra beds and boxes, no more furniture than the ploughman's hut, though, perchance, the abode of a man who owns half the village.

Another of the brick houses standing in this street, and presenting an exterior in all respects similar, is a temple, wherein rites more mysterious than edifying are continually being performed. We pause for a minute within the doorway; wondering at the hideous idols; at the dim lights; at the gaudy colouring of the massive pillars which support the roof; at the lofty and wide flight of steps ascending to the shrine; at the atmosphere heavy with incense; at the heathenish, ignorant pictures; at the chanting of the priests, sounding like the buzzing of bagpipes; until we turn, and with a feeling of relief pass into the pure cool air of the street. At the corner is another temple: not a mysterious incense-filled chamber, but an open shrine, where all passengers can see and worship their chosen God, in the shape of some hideous idol, surrounded by floral offerings.

During the middle of the day, and in the early part of the afternoon, the streets are at their quietest. Even natives avoid going out in the heat of the sun, as much as possible. Trade is now less active. Indeed, with the few shops situated in this thoroughfare it has altogether ceased. The drowsy influence of the heat, and the quiet of the hour, have so affected yonder confectioner, that a Pariah dog has caught up one of his patties, and is scampering away with it as fast as his legs can carry him. But our banker, that sharp wide-awake man of business, is by no means under the influence of the weather, or of anything else but his own interests, which somehow advance by a rule of "double interest," a peculiar theorem, not found in the works of any ancient or modern arithmetician. He is ready for business, and looks so hungrily and eagerly after our pockets, as he squats on his mat in the verandah of his house, with his ledgers, certain red-covered books, his tin-boxes, and his large iron-bound heavily-padlocked chest or safe, that we hurry past him as if he were an ogre. Another shop-keeper who has chosen this quiet spot in preference to the noisy bazaar, is the village bookseller, who, a learned-looking man with specta-

cles on nose, is so absorbed in the study of one of his own books, that he notices us not as we approach and linger for a moment at his stall. It contains an endless assortment of paper and cloth-covered publications. The leaves of some are open, so as to exhibit the pictures; some bear illustrations on their covers; representations of Hindu gods, and of events in the Hindu mythology.

The charpoy is an article of as frequent use by day as it is by night. Its offices are various, while its shape is beautifully simple. A bed by night, it is a couch by day. It is the common settee of the family. When an Englishman would offer his visitor a chair, a Hindu would offer him a seat on his charpoy. At this time of day the diurnal use of the charpoy is very visible. In one verandah, a naked little urchin, who grins at us as we pass, is making it his play-ground. In another, a woman is seated on it, nursing a child. In a third, a gentleman, who apparently "lives at home at ease," and has no business, stretched at his full length on the homely couch, is enjoying his midday siesta.

The creaking we hear in many of the huts proceeds, as we may learn by peeping in through any open door, from an oil or corn mill, which a miserable lean cow is working, dragging the heavy groaning machine round and round after her, in a ceaseless circle; while instances of housewives grinding corn in the ordinary and well-known method, between two flat stones, are seen in many a verandah and court-yard.

Our village enjoys but a short twilight. About forty minutes of day remain after the sun sinks beneath the horizon. So, about an hour or two before that time our village again puts on a bustling air. Trade grows active again; ploughmen throng the streets, driving their cattle home; women go to fill their pitchers at the river or the tanks; people take their evening stroll. Troops of children, shouting and laughing, just let loose from the village school, chase one another up and down the streets; or, forming in procession, march about the village to the music of their own voices. Others, in some open space, get up a game not unlike that known to English schoolboys as "rounders." Scholars from the government academy, embryo bankers' clerks, or merchants' clerks, salute us on their way home with "Good morning, sir!" Thereby supposing that they have done as England does, and that the only thing required to complete their metamorphosis into a thoroughbred sahib is an English suit of clothes. Now, the magistrate's and the police superintendent's cutcherries close, and send forth, to swell the evening crowd, numbers of loud-talking clamorous suitors, who, whether successful or unsuccessful, seem equally elated in being in some way brought under the notice of government. Now, the good housewife, broom in hand, sets her house in order against her husband's return from plough or desk. The ghat, which was in the morning the most fashionable spot, is, in the evening, not honoured with so good

an attendance. Not many women are about at this hour.

Our walk through the village to-day has been but little noticed. The apathetic character of the native, and his absorption in his own business, cause him, except on occasions of idleness or of great interest—when he can be offensively curious—to be entirely indifferent to the actions of any other persons, although that other person's skin be of a different colour to his own. So we have neither been hooted, nor pelted, nor followed by gazing crowds; indeed, with the exception of some bashful maidens, who, more from affection and a desire to be noticed, as evinced by their slyly peeping at and smiling on us, than from any real feeling of modesty, covered their heads while we passed them, no one has given us more attention than that contained in the casual glance which is bestowed on every passer-by.

By degrees, as night draws on, signs of the approach of that time of rest which the whole world alike acknowledges and enjoys are seen in the extended forms which appear in the verandahs of the various huts. The Hindu's chief meal is now eaten, and the vast dish of rice which composes it, is so disproportionate to the capacity of his stomach, that he becomes the victim of his own prosperity, and a prey to all the pangs of dyspepsia. So, to ease his burdened frame, he reclines his limbs, and in ruminative quiet and under the influence of his soothing hubble-bubble, gets rid of the unpleasant effect of his evening meal.

Dim oil lamps are but poor assistants to trade, and after struggling for a dull hour or so, the shops are one by one shut up, and the streets become dark and quiet. Quiet, but for the cries of the nightly watchman, answered from all quarters by his companions, and echoed by the howling of the village dogs and the distant jackals.

SECOND-CLASS VIRTUES.

WE are not, as a rule, perfect, but most of us regret our shortcomings. When we do what is wrong we are usually sorry afterwards that we cannot undo it, or, at any rate, we respect those who are better, firmer, and more moral than ourselves. I believe this preference of good to evil to be innate, natural, not the artificial product of civilisation, or based upon selfish expediency; for we find it amongst the most thoughtless savages. Even Sir Samuel Baker, who takes quite a pessimist view of the wild African, and seems inclined, in one chapter, to deny him the bare power of comprehending gratitude, honesty, or truth, with that frankness which adds so much both to the interest and value of his writings, tells, in the next, of traits in the characters of individual "natives" which seem to upset his theory.

But though we all admire virtue as a whole, we have by no means an equal respect for all the virtues. Now, there is generosity; every-

one considers that to be a first-class virtue ; we will pardon almost any shortcoming in other respects to a generous man, while of economy we have but a poor opinion. The free-handed liberal fellow, who spends what he has to-day, and never looks forward to to-morrow, who runs in debt, borrows money of his friends, and leaves his widow and children unprovided for at his death, we respect, admire, and love ; our tongues may blame him, but our hearts yearn towards him ; while it is but a cold and grudging approbation we afford to his frugal neighbour who lives within his small means, never buys anything without thinking whether he can do without it, travels second class, prefers omnibuses to cabs and walking to either, pays his bills quarterly, is independent of everybody, gives his own children a fair chance in the world, and very likely assists those of his noble-hearted, open-handed acquaintance. And yet the practice of economy requires the exercise of an immense amount of resolution, self-denial, and integrity, qualities which all hold estimable. The fact is, that a careful attention to the pence is apt to become exaggerated, till the virtue of thrift degenerates into the vice of parsimony, and, as meanness is an unsocial, while extravagance is a genial, vice, it is natural enough that we should esteem generosity, which is apparently related to the latter, beyond economy, which seems more connected with the former. A philanthropist, who has a thousand a year, and lives on three hundred, in order to have seven hundred to spend in charity, may get any amount of credit from the outer world, but his neighbours and relatives are sure to think him mean and stingy. For it is an odd fact, that we judge of a man's generosity more by what he spends on himself than by what he spends on others, and nothing goes down with society like the rollicking selfishness of a man who shares with his friends the plunder of his tradesmen.

Humility is another second-class virtue. Of course, as Christians, we are obliged to rank it very high, in theory, but practically we do not think much of it. A capital quality for servants and dependants of all kinds, no doubt, and perhaps for our equals, so far as their relations with ourselves are concerned. It fact, we like humility principally because it does not offend our own pride.

Sobriety is another minor virtue. We are constantly told that this is a sober age, so I suppose it must be so. We likewise (which is a curious result) see around us a vast amount of crime, disease, and misery resulting from drunken habits. And not only among the working classes. What middle-aged man is there who has been to a public school, or to college, or in the army or navy, or resided long in London, who could not name old friends who have come to utter grief through tippling ? And yet the most sober of us have a charity for intemperance which we deny to other vices, and by no means plume ourselves much on our abstinence. I fancy that this tenderness for intoxication arises very much from the pretty

things poets have written about it. Messieurs the poets are likewise responsible in a great measure for masculine morality being held as a second-class virtue. We have improved a little bit, thanks, perhaps, to Wordsworth and Tennyson, and, if Pitt were alive now, no comic paper would lampoon him because he was not a *debauché* ; but I fear that young men are not yet particularly anxious to be thought moral.

But I don't wish to pick at the moles in other folks' eyes without confessing to a beam in my own. Moral courage is the virtue which I cannot for the life of me appreciate properly. No doubt it is most estimable, most noble, even heroic, but I am afflicted with a sort of colour blindness with respect to it, and if I meet a man who possesses it in any extraordinary degree, it is ten to one that I mistake him either for a shameless impostor, a thick-skinned blockhead, or a prig. I am not quite sure, alas ! that I quite know what the virtue is. Of course everybody can understand that it is noble for a man to do what he knows to be right, in spite of any amount of contumely he may bring upon himself. But if I am correct in supposing that the possession of moral courage would enable him to do so without *caring* for that contumely, I should not sympathise with it at all ; on the contrary, the more he suffered the more I should admire him, if once convinced that he was acting from a conscientious motive ; which in the case of a man running a muck amongst the feelings and opinions of his friends and contemporaries, I am always too ready to doubt. It is so rare in these days for any one to be unable to follow his own bent without a fuss, that one is naturally suspicious, on hearing of a case of persecution, that the martyr may have courted the opportunity of putting his moral courage to the proof. For, to my distorted vision, moral courage looks very much like indifference to public opinion, and though that may in a few rare instances help a man to be virtuous, it certainly removes one of the strongest impediments to his being vicious. Parents and tutors know best, perhaps, but it always sets my teeth on edge to hear them holding forth to boys upon the merits of learning to say No—as if they were heiresses—and not minding being laughed at. Some thirty years ago there was a book with enticing covers, which set forth how one James Proper used to rebuke those schoolfellows who incited him to trespass out of bounds and commit other breaches of discipline. The finger of scorn was pointed at James, but he wrapped himself up in his virtue and cared not ; indeed, he rather liked being made a martyr of. Well, I always used to long to kick James Proper, and almost fear that age has not deprived me of that yearning. Why, what would be the use of sending a boy who was covered with this impenetrable hide of moral courage to school at all ? Surely the desecration of classic authors and the manufacture of nonsense verses are but insignificant items of education compared with the training

which a lad receives by being thrown into a little world of superiors, equals, and inferiors, where his good points are encouraged by the consideration which they bring him, and ridicule teaches him to suppress or conceal his weak ones. But how is he to be broken of meanness, physical timidity, uncleanliness, untruthfulness, and a host of small vices which, unchecked, will render him an odious man—if he does not mind being jeered at?

The man who can stand upon a seat on a public promenade, as one did yesterday, and say, apropos of nothing, "Let us sing a nim," do so without a second voice chiming in from amongst the astonished crowd, never missing a shake, and then proceed to pray and preach, must have a very high degree of moral courage. I think I would rather have the cholera than do it myself—would not you? Do you wish that you were able to do it? I do not impugn the man's motives, which were doubtless excellent. God forbid that I should dare to call him hypocrite, or try to silence him. But still I don't admire him much. Neither him nor the man who held a banner inscribed with a Holy Mystery, on the Epsom-road, last Derby Day. *That* I would stop if I could, and it would be easily done if the well-meaning promoters of such exhibitions could only be made to see their demoralising effect; if they knew how often they surprise into blasphemy men who have no habitual disrespect for sacred things, but are out for a holiday, and in high spirits, inclined to see everything in a comic light. There stood the standard bearer, calm, fat-faced, smiling in conscious superiority, careless of chaff, utterly free from shame, though one would imagine that if anything would arouse a man's modesty it would be the finding himself advertised as the one good man amongst three converging multitudes—he had selected a four-cross road—of reprobates. Well, I cannot help regarding it as exceptionally fortunate that this standard bearer should have found a religious method of employing his moral courage. Had he been a director, now, with a tendency to peculation, no wholesome dread of exposure would have intervened to keep him straight.

THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCE'S PLUME.
A STORY OF THE BATTLE OF CRECY, FROM FROISSART'S CHRONICLES.

I.

WHITE clung the sparkling frost to the long dry weeds in the hedges, The bramble's crimsoning leaf spread crusted and curdled with silver; White nets of sparkling thread, the cobwebs hung on the bushes, Where spiders, frozen and dead, were swaying like felons in fetters; Heavy and frozen, the folds hung from the slumbering banners, Muffled, and solemn, and low, came the sound of the sentinels' voices. The old blind king on the hill stood, and the hum of the nations Rose, and, filling the air, gladdened the heart of the monarch;

Armed, and wearing a crown, his long hair flowing and snowy, Mixed with his beard as it fell on the steel and gold of his armour; His thin hands leant on a sword that had shone in many a battle, Sceptre and prop of a realm guarded from Mahomet's children; His helm was crested with plumes, spoils of the birds of the desert, A triple white feather and crest glittered high over his visor; At his feet knelt, praying, his son, armed and prepared for the saddle; His charger, pawing the ground, neighed by the open pavilion, Ardent as hound for the chase, eager to leap on the lances. The king spake never a word, but lifted his eyes unto Heaven, And his tears fell trickling fast, as he muttered a prayer and a blessing; But the son, impatient and hot, vaulted at once on his charger, And cried to the banners, "Advance, in the name of the Prince of Bohemia!" Then, with a flourish of horns, and a burst of chivalrous music, The knights swept eagerly on, and bore down the slope of the valley, With ruffle of pennon and flag, and a tossing of threatening lances, As the blind king fell to the ground, and prayed with passionate weeping, Blessing both banner and crest, in the name of St. James the Apostle, The patron saint of his son, the saint of the land of Bohemia.

II.

Then the Bishop of Avignon came, and knelt at the feet of the champion, Prayed him to tarry awhile, and not to lead yet to the battle. "Strike at the English, the knaves!" cried the proud prince, smiling in anger; "This day," said the heir to the throne, "we must win honour or perish." Taking the flag in his hand, he swore to lead on with the foremost;— Close, and deadly, and thick shot the threatening ranks of the archers, Drawing together their shafts, equal in skill and in courage. As the prince rode leisurely on, deep through the flood of the battle. Stripes of crimson and white adorned their numberless trappings: "These are womanly things!" cried the brave young prince of Bohemia; "Away with this gilding and fur, this tinsel unstained by the battle— These chains and jewels and gold, mere marks for the shafts of an archer; Kings in the days of romance wore rude steel forged with the hammer, Close-fitting hauberk of chain, defying the Mussulman sabres; My father's is beaten and bruised, and split with Carpathian arrows, Crimson with blood from the heart of Paynims, slain in the mêlée; The badge I wear on my shield, was won in the fray with the heathen; These plumes of an Arab fierce torn from the brow of an infidel Soldan, To-day shall glimmer afar o'er the tempest and roar of the onset. Leave women ermines and fur, soft mantles satin and silken; Give me a clothing of steel, and adamant dug from the mountain,

Steel that may laugh at the swords and splinter the lances
of iron,
Deriding even the stones from the catapults groaning
and shrieking." Then the prince he mounted his steed and rode down
the hill to the battle : You have read of the knights of romance—Perceforest,
Tristram, and Arthur,
The giant whose mantle was trimmed with the beards
of the kings he had vanquished—
Launcelot, knight of the lake, and Percival, slayer of
dragons ; Yet these, though noble and rich, were clad like labouring
peasants
Compared to the barons and earls who encircled the
Prince of Bohemia.— Gabriel, Count of Bayonne, cried, "To-day is the saddest
of any,
Knights of Cyprus and Crete, if we beat not these
English in battle."

* * * * *

Many the valorous deed as the axes shivered the lances,
As helms flashed sparks of fire like the anvil under
the hammer ;
Flights of arrows and bolts flew thick as the swallows in
autumn,
'Gainst the puissant monarch's array, 'gainst the horses
blazoned and barded.
All the cross-bowmen of France led on the chosen
battalion,
Close as the hairs of a brush were the numberless heads
of the lances,
And through them, like roar of the beasts heard by night
in a tropical forest,
Came cries of "St. Dennis for France," "St. Dennis for
France and the Lilies ;"
As the sun, breaking out of a cloud, shone on the swords
and the armour,
While the trumpets were sounding, and rang with a
merry and chivalrous cadence,
As they blew, came flying a dove, and perched on the
staff of a banner ;
Then they knew they were favoured of God, and
clamoured, and all moved together.
"Advance!" loud shouted the prince, "and bear down
these ravening robbers."
Chandos, and Talbot, and Scrope, guarding the clusters
of archers ;
The Duke of Athens is down, swept off by the hurrying
eddies,
And under an oak in a lane, lies stretched Sir Reginald
D'Artois.
Then, making the sign of the cross, and raising his
eyes unto Heaven,
"Now is the season for death," cried the prince, and
spurred to the rescue ;
"Neville and Darcy and Scrope are hemming us in
with their horses ;
Strike, for the glory of God, strike, for the flag of St.
Dennis !
Make us a way through the press, or die in the gap we
have cloven ;
Such is the usage of knights to dig out a grave with
their axes ;
Now, by St. Anthony's head, to the death of a knight
or to conquest." Then the prince leaped again on his steed, and hurled in
the thick of the battle.

III.

But a traitor and villainous spy ran to the King of
Bohemia,
Tears in his treacherous eyes, and knelt at the feet of
the monarch.
"What tidings, Sir Knight, of my son ? I fear he is
slain in the mêlée ?"
"Alas!" said the traitor, "he's fled by the highway
leading to Paris,
Leaving his barons and flag to the care of his squires
and his yeomen."

"Nay, then," the monarch replied, "it is fit I should
fall in this battle,
Not caring an hour to survive this shame and this stain
on my honour." As he spoke rolled down on his beard hot tears of
anger and sorrow.
"I will carry my banner to death through ranks of the
insolent foemen ;
Ah ! as God is my help, I will never return from the
battle,
By him, who weeping for us, died on the tree like a
felon,
Let us break the van of these slaves. Advance, Sir
Knight, with my banner.
Ye all are my vassals and friends," cried the king, as he
smothered his sorrow ;
"Ye will not refuse the request of an old man weary
and broken ;
I fain would strike with my sword, if only one blow in
this contest,
'Tis better to fall in the field than to die with one's head
on the pillow.
Tie my steed's bridle to yours, and lead me first with
my banner." Then two of the stalwartest knights tied their three
bridles together,
And slow, and silent, and sad they rode down the hill to
the valley.

IV.

"My son, any tidings of him ?" said the king, as an
archer came running,
And fell at the feet of his prince, wounded and feathered
with arrows.
"How goes the battle below—where is my son and his
horsemen ?"—
"Ha ! by St. Ives and St. Giles, and the crown of our
Lady in Heaven,
Schwartzhof and Hoffmann are dead, and half the
stout troopers of Binslau."
"And my son ?" "By the road that turns hard by
the neighbouring valley,
I saw him lopping his lance four feet from the wood of
the handle,
Doffing the spurs from his heels, and standing at bay
'mong the hunters ;
His eyes half hid by the plumes that covered his brow
and his forehead ;
He had stripped his trappings and gems, his helm was
dinted and cloven,
His sword was clotted and dark, and dark was his
visor and armour,
His red beard tangled and long fell on his breast and
shoulders,
His right hand, wielding an axe, was cleaving a road
through the archers ;
Mowing a path to the tents he trampled the dead and
the dying.—
Seeing my armour and badge he waved me a proud
salutation :—
Through flights of arrows and stones, mid the terrible
roar of the engine,
Through thrustings of lances and blades, and sweepings
of two-handed falchions,
Through cleavings of gorgets and shields and clouds of
gathering banners,
Through shriekings, groanings, and cries, and curses,
and moanings to Heaven,
I came to render thee aid, loving thee chieftest of any."
"Go," said the monarch, and sighed. "Thou hast home
and a child to inherit.
My son is no traitor, thank God, but died in the heart
of the onslaught ;
I am now childless and old, and life is to me but a
burden,
Go tell the monarch of France how the chief of Bohemia
perished."
Then slow and silent and sad the old blind king and his
courtiers
Bound all their bridles together and rode down into the
battle.

V.

Deep under mountains of dead, gashed, and smitten,
and trampled,
The heralds searching the field, counting the banners
and scutcheons,
Found the corpse of the son pierced with arrows and
lances;
Above him the old man lay, the old blind King of
Bohemia,
One arm round the neck of the youth and one on a
gash in his forehead.
The Black Prince pausing to watch the heralds seeking
the banners,
Bent, and plucking the crest, the three white plumes of
the ostrich,
Placed them, spotted with blood, in the battered peak
of his helmet.

NEW UNCOMMERCIAL SAMPLES.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

A FLY-LEAF IN A LIFE.

ONCE upon a time (no matter when), I was engaged in a pursuit (no matter what), which could be transacted by myself alone; in which I could have no help; which imposed a constant strain on the attention, memory, observation, and physical powers; and which involved an almost fabulous amount of change of place and rapid railway travelling. I had followed this pursuit through an exceptionally trying winter in an always trying climate, and had resumed it in England after but a brief repose. Thus it came to be prolonged until, at length—and, as it seemed, all of a sudden—it so wore me out that I could not rely, with my usual cheerful confidence, upon myself to achieve the constantly recurring task, and began to feel (for the first time in my life) giddy, jarred, shaken, faint, uncertain of voice and sight and tread and touch, and dull of spirit. The medical advice I sought within a few hours, was given in two words: "Instant rest." Being accustomed to observe myself as curiously as if I were another man, and knowing the advice to meet my only need, I instantly halted in the pursuit of which I speak, and rested.

My intention was, to interpose, as it were, a fly-leaf in the book of my life, in which nothing should be written from without for a brief season of a few weeks. But some very singular experiences recorded themselves on this same fly-leaf, and I am going to relate them literally. I repeat the word: literally.

My first odd experience was of the remarkable coincidence between my case, in the general mind, and one Mr. MERDLE'S as I find it recorded in a work of fiction called LITTLE DORRIT. To be sure, Mr. Merdle was a swindler, forger, and thief,

and my calling had been of a less harmful (and less remunerative) nature; but it was all one for that.

Here is Mr. Merdle's case:

"At first, he was dead of all the diseases that ever were known, and of several brand-new maladies invented with the speed of Light to meet the demand of the occasion. He had concealed a dropsy from infancy, he had inherited a large estate of water on the chest from his grandfather, he had had an operation performed upon him every morning of his life for eighteen years, he had been subject to the explosion of important veins in his body after the manner of fireworks, he had had something the matter with his lungs, he had had something the matter with his heart, he had had something the matter with his brain. Five hundred people who sat down to breakfast entirely uninformed on the whole subject, believed before they had done breakfast, that they privately and personally knew Physician to have said to Mr. Merdle, 'You must expect to go out, some day, like the snuff of a candle;' and that they knew Mr. Merdle to have said to Physician, 'A man can die but once.' By about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, something the matter with the brain, became the favourite theory against the field; and by twelve the something had been distinctly ascertained to be 'Pressure.'

"Pressure was so entirely satisfactory to the public mind, and seemed to make every one so comfortable, that it might have lasted all day but for Bar's having taken the real state of the case into Court at half-past nine. Pressure, however, so far from being overthrown by the discovery, became a greater favourite than ever. There was a general moralising upon Pressure, in every street. All the people who had tried to make money and had not been able to do it, said, There you were! You no sooner began to devote yourself to the pursuit of wealth, than you got Pressure. The idle people improved the occasion in a similar manner. See, said they, what you brought yourself to by work, work, work! You persisted in working, you overdid it, Pressure came on, and you were done for! This consideration was very potent in many quarters, but nowhere more so than among the young clerks and partners who had never been in the slightest danger of overdoing it. These, one and all declared, quite piously, that they hoped they would never forget the warning as long as they lived, and that their conduct might be so

regulated as to keep off Pressure, and preserve them, a comfort to their friends, for many years."

Just my case—if I had only known it—when I was quietly basking in the sunshine in my Kentish meadow!

But while I so rested, thankfully recovering every hour, I had experiences more odd than this. I had experiences of spiritual conceit, for which, as giving me a new warning against that curse of mankind, I shall always feel grateful to the supposition that I was too far gone to protest against playing sick lion to any stray donkey with an itching hoof. All sorts of people seemed to become vicariously religious at my expense. I received the most uncompromising warning that I was a Heathen: on the conclusive authority of a field preacher, who, like the most of his ignorant and vain and daring class, could not construct a tolerable sentence in his native tongue or pen a fair letter. This inspired individual called me to order roundly, and knew in the freest and easiest way where I was going to, and what would become of me if I failed to fashion myself on his bright example, and was on terms of blasphemous confidence with the Heavenly Host. He was in the secrets of my heart, and in the lowest soundings of my soul—he!—and could read the depths of my nature better than his A B C, and could turn me inside out, like his own clammy glove. But what is far more extraordinary than this—for such dirty water as this could alone be drawn from such a shallow and muddy source—I found from the information of a beneficed clergyman, of whom I never heard and whom I never saw, that I had not, as I rather supposed I had, lived a life of some reading, contemplation, and inquiry; that I had not studied, as I rather supposed I had, to inculcate some Christian lessons in books; that I had never tried, as I rather supposed I had, to turn a child or two tenderly towards the knowledge and love of our Saviour; that I had never had, as I rather supposed I had had, departed friends, or stood beside open graves; but that I had lived a life of "uninterrupted prosperity," and that I needed this "check, overmuch," and that the way to turn it to account was to read these sermons and these poems, enclosed, and written and issued by my correspondent! I beg it may be understood that I relate facts of my own uncommercial experience, and no vain imaginings. The documents in proof lie near my hand.

Another odd entry on the fly-leaf, of a

more entertaining character, was the wonderful persistency with which kind sympathisers assumed that I had injuriously coupled with the so suddenly relinquished pursuit, those personal habits of mine most obviously incompatible with it, and most plainly impossible of being maintained, along with it. As, all that exercise, all that cold bathing, all that wind and weather, all that uphill training—all that everything else, say, which is usually carried about by express trains in a portmanteau and hat-box, and partaken of under a flaming row of gas-lights in the company of two thousand people. This assuming of a whole case against all fact and likelihood, struck me as particularly droll, and was an oddity of which I certainly had had no adequate experience in life until I turned that curious fly-leaf.

My old acquaintances the begging-letter writers came out on the fly-leaf, very piously indeed. They were glad, at such a serious crisis, to afford me another opportunity of sending that Post-office order. I needn't make it a pound, as previously insisted on; ten shillings might ease my mind. And Heaven forbid that they should refuse, at such an insignificant figure, to take a weight off the memory of an erring fellow-creature! One gentleman, of an artistic turn (and copiously illustrating the books of the Mendicity Society), thought it might soothe my conscience in the tender respect of gifts misused, if I would immediately cash up in aid of his lowly talent for original design—as a specimen of which he enclosed me a work of art which I recognised as a tracing from a woodcut originally published in the late Mrs. Trollope's book on America, forty or fifty years ago. The number of people who were prepared to live long years after me, untiring benefactors to their species, for fifty pounds a piece down, was astonishing. Also, of those who wanted bank notes for stiff penitential amounts, to give away:—not to keep, on any account.

Divers wonderful medicines and machines insinuated recommendations of themselves into the fly-leaf that was to have been so blank. It was specially observable that every prescriber, whether in a moral or physical direction, knew me thoroughly—knew me from head to heel, in and out, through and through, upside down. I was a glass piece of general property, and everybody was on the most surprisingly intimate terms with me. A few public institutions had complimentary perceptions of corners in my mind, of which, after considerable self-examination, I have not discovered any in-

dication. Neat little printed forms were addressed to those corners, beginning with the words: "I give and bequeath."

Will it seem exaggerative to state my belief that the most honest, the most modest, and the least vain-glorious of all the records upon this strange fly-leaf, was a letter from the self-deceived discoverer of the recondite secret "how to live four or five hundred years"? Doubtless it will seem so, yet the statement is not exaggerative by any means, but is made in my serious and sincere conviction. With this, and with a laugh at the rest that shall not be cynical, I turn the Fly-leaf, and go on again.

AS THE CROW FLIES.

DUKE EAST. PLESHY AND DUNMOW TO COLCHESTER.

DUNMOW is not far from Pleshy, and Pleshy is a place not to be lightly passed over by any observant crow, being a Shakespearean place, with the Bard's sign-manual engraved upon every mossy stone of its ruins. In the quiet little Essex village, embedded amid wheat and clover fields, there is a grassy enclosure, and in the midst of that green space rises a high steep mound, with stumps of old walls showing here and there among the turf, and with trees and bushes sprinkling the slopes. That high steep mound, ringed round by a deep ditch, which is crossed by an old bridge with a high stilted arch of old dark red brick, has been trodden by many kings and barons. Pleshy has from time immemorial been a fortress, and set apart for a place of vantage, defiance, or safety. It seems always to have won the soldier's eye, and to have set men rearing walls and digging trenches. It was first the Praetorian centre of a Roman camp, and money of the Legionaries has been found here. The Normans, who had quick eyes for seeing strong places, and quick hands for seizing them, built here in Stephen's troublous reign, when Geoffrey Mandeville, Earl of Essex, reared his keep upon the mound of Pleshy.

Afterwards, there dwelt here the wise, but harsh and severe Duke of Gloucester, the uncle of Richard the Second. Gloucester waged perpetual war on the Duke of Ireland and others of the young king's weak and wicked favourites, imprisoned Sir Simon Burley, a great warrior in Gascony under the Black Prince, and finally, in a rough and despotic way, settled matters by beheading Sir Simon and his friends and fellow minions, Sir Robert Trevilian, Sir Nicholas Bramber, and Sir John Standwich. Richard of Bordeaux, the son of the Black Prince, had begun well; he had quelled Wat Tyler's rebellion in a chivalrous way, by riding boldly among the Kentish bowmen and hammermen in Smithfield. He had led an army into Scotland and burnt Melrose. He had taken up arms against his turbulent and discontented barons, and lastly, striking down many Kerns and Gallow-glasses, in spite of their knives and darts, and

reducing to submission the Kings of Meath, Ulster, Leinster, and Connaught, had knighted them in Dublin Cathedral at the Feast of Our Lady in March. But gradually this young Absalom, this "plunger" of those days, grew worse and worse, more wantonly extravagant, more despotic, more like Edward the Second, more surrendered to dissolute and dangerous counsellors, abhorred by prelates, Lords and Commons.

He dreaded the Lord of Pleshy, his stern uncle, for his harsh reproofs, and his open contempt, but still more because it was rumoured that he would soon seize the crown, and reign from the Thames to the Humber. Into Richard's ready ear the wicked Achitophels poured the "leproous distilment of their devilish counsels." One summer afternoon the fine young king, rich in cloth of gold and jingling with golden bells, set out from Eltham with his retinue to visit his stern uncle at Pleshy. The king arrived before sunset; the warm light steeped the royal towers, and the duke, who was rough and soldierly in his habits, was already rising from supper. Food was served again for the king, and the meal over, Richard besought the duke to ride with him to London to give him advice on matters of state. The lure took, the trap fell, the duke was snared. He made himself ready for the thirty miles' evening ride, the king graciously saluted the duchess and her attendants, and they set forth. It was a base deed, and basely wrought. The duke once cajoled from his eyrie had but his numbered days to live. The king rode hard, avoiding Brentwood, and at Stratford he spurred ahead. It was about half-past ten at night, in a lane that led to the Thames, that the king laughingly waved his hand to his uncle, and struck spurs into his horse. That moment the Earl Marshal and his clump of spears rode up and arrested the duke. The duke struggled and shouted to the king. Richard, deaf to mercy, would not even turn his head, but rode on straight to his lodgings in the Tower. The duke the men forced at once into a boat that took him to a vessel lying ready at anchor in the Thames. The Earl Marshal and his pitiless men also embarked, the wind and tide were favourable; they dropped down the river, and arrived late the evening afterwards at Calais, of which place the earl was governor. The next day the king returned to Eltham and sent the Earls of Arundel and Warwick to the Tower. The Dukes of Lancaster and York, astonished at the king's courage, were afraid to act.

The duke, refused leave to visit the town of Calais, felt his death was near, and begged for a priest to calmly confess his sins, and to help him to appeal to God for mercy. His end was very near, as far as Froissart could ascertain; the day after his arrival, he was sitting down to dinner, the tables were laid, and he was already about to wash his hands, when four men rushed from an adjoining chamber and strangled him with a towel. Others, however, assert that Hall, one of the men engaged, after-

wards confessed that the duke was smothered with pillows. His body was then undressed, covered with furred mantles, and a report spread that he had died of a fit of apoplexy while dressing for dinner. The Earl Marshal, who was nearly related to the duke, instantly put on mourning for him, as did all the English knights and squires in Calais. The body of the murdered man was then embalmed, put into a leaden coffin, and sent to England. It was landed at Hadleigh Castle, that fortress whose mossy ruins still look down upon the junction of the Thames and Medway. There the dishonoured corpse, to which nobody dared show respect, was put in a cart and sent, without escort, to Pleshy to be buried in the church of the Holy Trinity, which the duke himself had founded, and endowed with twelve canonries. Here at last the stern duke found real mourners; and the duchess, his son Humphrey, and his two daughters shed bitter tears of rage and grief at his murder, and double cause indeed had the duchess to grieve, for the king had just had her uncle, the Earl of Arundel, beheaded in Cheapside before his own eyes, and the Earl of Warwick banished for life to the Isle of Wight, "opposite the coast of Normandy."

Pleshy-Plaisant, the pleasant place, had become a desolation; God's vengeance may sometimes seem slow, but it is unerring—two years after the halberds of those Pontefract men of arms raised together, fell together, and when they fell they beat out the life of Richard of Bordeaux. In Shakespeare's *Richard the Second*—a play in which the poet has thrown a false halo of sympathy over an abandoned and ruthless king—he makes the widowed Duchess of Gloucester revile John of Gaunt for not revenging his brother's slaughter, and the mourning duchess sends a sorrowful and bitter message to York, her dead husband's second brother:

Bid him—ah, what?
With all good speed at Pleshy visit me.
Alack! and what shall good old York there see
But empty lodgings and unfurnished walls;
Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?
And what hear there for welcome but my groans?
Therefore command me; let him *not* come there
To seek out sorrow that dwells everywhere.

And in a later part of the same play the Duke of York at Ely House (Ely-place) commands a servant

Sirrah! get thee to Pleshy, to my sister Gloster—
Bid her send presently a thousand pounds.

Many a sorrowful day after, at Flint, and at Pontefract, Richard of Bordeaux must have thought of that fatal evening when at star rise "the murdered man" rode gaily beside him on the London-road, lured by treacherous flattery to a cruel death in the vaulted room at Calais.

Pipes and tabors sound your best, for Dunmow is hard by Pleshy, with its purple waves of clover not untenanted by bees; malthouse crows peer out among the green trees. The crow honours Dunmow, not so much for the sake of its world-famous Flitch, as for having been the birthplace of one of those great originators who reshape the world on their

lathes, and send it spinning on truer and faster. Lionel Lukin, the inventor of lifeboats, was born in this Essex village, and all advocates for local patriotism should desire to see a statue to him erected there, to incite future Dunmow men to direct their talents to as noble issues as Lukin. He obtained his patent in 1785. In 1789 a Mr. Henry Grealish, of South Shields, carried out a similar idea to meet a similar want, and by 1804 there had been thirty-one lifeboats built and three hundred lives saved. Mr. James Beeching, of Yarmouth, improved the lifeboat in 1851, and in 1852 the tubular lifeboat was patented by Mr. H. Richardson, "the challenger." In 1865 there were one hundred and eighty-five lifeboats on our coasts. In 1864 they and Captain Manby's invaluable rope-throwing rockets together had saved three thousand six hundred and nineteen lives, making, with the nine previous years, thirty-six thousand two hundred and sixty-one lives saved by the invention of Lionel Lukin, the noble man of Dunmow.

Ghosts of Beaumont and Fletcher hover round us while we tell of the old custom of Little Dunmow, referred to by Chaucer, and mentioned by Grose as a jocular tenure never to be forgotten. One of the Fitzwalters, in the early part of the thirteenth century, is said, after some sardonic reflections on the joys and sorrows, the roses and thorns of matrimony, to have first instituted the ceremony (circa May 3). He was probably the son of that "Mars of men," Robert Fitzwalter, father of Matilda the fair, a lady with whom King John fell madly in love. He banished her father, who was in the way, in 1213, and then sent a perfumed messenger to the lonely Matilda, with fresh protestations of his old suit; but she, being still cold, disdainful, and inexorable, the messenger, who either took it very much to heart, or else had conditional orders, poisoned the lady with a poached egg salted with arsenic.

The celebrated custom at Dunmow was to solemnly and rejoicingly present a fitch or gammon of bacon to any married couple who, a year and a day after their marriage, would take a prescribed oath that neither of them had repented their union, or had a word of quarrel. The claimants kneel on two uncomfortably sharp-pointed stones in the churchyard, and there, after certain other rites, take the following quaint oath:

You shall swear by custom of confession,
That you ne'er made nuptial transgression;
Nor since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls or contentious strife,
Or otherwise at bed or at board,
Offended each other by deed or by word;
Or since the parish clerk said Amen,
Wished yourselves unmarried again;
Or in a twelvemonth and a day
Repented not in thought any way;
But continued true in thought and desire.
As when you joined hands in holy quire.
If to these conditions without all fear,
Of your own accord you will freely swear,
A whole gammon of bacon you shall receive,
And bear it hence with joy and good leave;
For this is our custom at Dunmow well known
Though the pleasure be ours, the bacon's your own.

This droll mode of rewarding forbearing tempers was certainly current even in Edward the Third's time, because Chaucer makes his merry, wanton wife of Bath say of her worried husband,

The bacon was not fet, for hem, I trow,
That some men have in Essex at Dunmowe.

The fitch was, it is said, claimed on an average about once in a century. The claim of the 20th of June, 1751, was peculiarly immortalised by an engraving of Moseley's, from an original drawing of the scene made by David Ogborne. It represents the joyous procession on their return from Dunmow Church with the fitch, and before the traditional quarrel had taken place, as to how the bacon was to be disposed of. The happy and successful claimants were Thomas Shakeshaft, weaver, of the parish of Weathersfield, and Ann his wife. They knelt down on the sharp stones, as cruelly insisted upon, took the oath, and bore away the gammon. Moseley's scarce engraving was republished by Cribb, 288, Holborn, in 1826. The celebrated Bowles, of Cornhill, also published another large print, now rare, of the Dunmow procession. After the repetition of the oath, the couple were seated in a square wooden chair, still preserved in the priory (very small it is), and carried round the site of the old manor, with drums and fiddles, and much noisy and exulting village minstrelsy, the fitch, totally ruined by the process, being thrust through with a pole, and carried before them. The steward's lord and officers of the manor followed with the inferior servants. Then came a very interesting part of the procession—the jury—six ogling bachelors and six smiling and backward-glancing maidens, who were by this great example urged onward to the blessed matrimonial state. The ceremony must indeed have been like a wedding breakfast—a perfect seed-plot of future marriages. Many thousands of people from all villages and towns, even as far as the borders of Suffolk, then followed, shouting and exulting in this triumph of Love and Hymen.

The oaken chair used on this occasion, was probably the official chair of some former prior of Dunmow, or else the official seat of the lord of the manor, being that in which the Fitzwalters for generations had, perhaps, received the suit and service of their servants. It was, however, a satanic device, the very Fiend's arch mock, the shrewdest subtlety of Discord, Mrs. Candour's grandmamma, to make the chair too small, so that the jammed and aching couple should quarrel instantly they had won the prize.

A custom, almost precisely similar to that of Dunmow, existed at Whichenoure, in Staffordshire, but is much less generally known. Pennant, who visited Whichenoure House in 1780, states that it was "remarkable from the painted wooden bacon fitch still hung up over the hall chimney, in memory of the singular tenure by which Sir Philip de Somerville in the time of Edward the Third held the manor." The oath

ran as follows: "Hear ye, Sir Philip de Somerville, Lord of Whichenoure, maintainer and giver of this bacon, that I, A., syth I wedded B., my wyfe, and syth I had her in my kepyng, and at wylle, by a yere and a daye after our marryge, I would not have changed for hane other, farer nor fowler, richer no pouer, ne for none other descended of greter lynage, sleeping no waking, at noo time; and if the said B. were sole, and I sole, I would take her to be my wyfe before all the wymen of the worlde, of what condytions soever they be, good or evyle, as help me God, and his seyntys, and this flesh and all fleshes." If the claimant were a "villager," corn and a cheese were given him in addition to the fitch, and a horse was likewise provided to take him out of the limits of the manor, all the free tenants thereof conducting him with "Trompets, tabourets, and other manoir of mystralise." In respect to the Whichenoure fitch, Pennant remarks, that it has "remained untouched from the first century of its institution to the present," adding, jocosely, "We are credibly informed that the late and present worthy owners of the manor were deterred from entering into the holy state, from the dread of not obtaining a single rasher of their own bacon."

In Grose's time the Dunmow lords of the manor tried hard to save their bacon, and refused the honourable trial of the fitch to several believers in the excellence of gammon. Probably, says the sly, fat friend of Burns, it was refused because "conjugal affection is not so rare now as heretofore, or else because qualification oaths are now supposed to be held less sacred."

The Dunmow fitch was first claimed in 1445, at least that is the first claim on record. Shakeshaft and his wife were shrewd people, for they made a large sum, in 1751, by selling slices of the beatified bacon to many of the five thousand persons present. Gradually the custom slept, as good and bad customs sometimes do, had indeed a good nap of a hundred and four years, then Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, the historical novelist, made a gallant and disinterested effort to revive it. The lord of the manor opposed the revival as a nuisance, but Mr. Ainsworth and his friends defrayed the expense of the festival, and provided not merely one but two sets of claimants. We almost forget whether they were advertised for, but there they appeared as large as life, and much more real, Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, of Chipping Ongar, and the Chevalier Chatelaine, an ex-Bourdeaux editor, not unknown in England as the dexterous and rather daring translator of Chaucer and other of our poets. It was quite a romantic picture by Frith. Rosettes? We believe you! Banners? Rather! Fiddles, fifes and drums, trumpets, bassoons, and horns? Plenty of them. Whether the stubborn lord of the ill manner could not have been compelled by the Dunmow people to carry out the old tenure, is a moot point which the crow merely throws out to the worthy lawyers of Essex generally. Let the cynics say what they like;

let them compare marriage to a bag of snakes and eels (stuff!), to a lottery (pshaw!), to a birdcage—those who are in wishing to get out, and those who are out wishing to get in (rubbish!), we despise such bitter churls (out on them). They know well enough (a pest on 'em!) the sour wretches, that every pair of us has deserved the blessed fitch, and that no one of us ever repented his marriage within the year—at least, let them say so who will. It was a goodly ceremony, and impressed on the Essex maidens those fine lines of the ex-shrew, Katherine :

" Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance commits his body
To painful labour, both by sea and land,
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
While thou liest warm at home, secure and safe,
And craves no other tribute at thy hands,
But love, fair looks, and true obedience,
Too little payment for so great a debt."

The last fitch given away was in 1860.

At Colchester-on-the-Colne the crow is bound to descend for two reasons : first, for the sake of its old and immortal monarch, King Cole ; secondly, for the sake of the touching story of the two Cavalier friends, who were here shot by Fairfax for defending the city stoutly against the Parliament. This Essex town, situated on the eminence above the river, was an old British post, appreciated by the Romans, and moulded by their strong hands into Camalodunum (temp. Claudio). Here it is supposed Cunobelin and his sons, Guiderius and Arviragus (Caractacus), reigned. (Shakespeare has endeared these names to us by culling them from early British history, Bede or Gildas, and making them the sons of his Cymbeline.) This town, where the Romans built temples and theatres, and established a mint, was one of their favourite colonies, and was often fought for, especially in 62, when the fierce Boadicea chased the Romans from the town, and slew the entire ninth legion.

It was not till the third century that the real King Cole shone forth ; but alas ! he had no fiddlers three, and therefore never called for them. He was really a most respectable potente, fond of oysters, and naturally much respected by the natives. Like a true British sailor, he rebelled from the Romans, resolving that Britons never, *never*, NEVER should be slaves, and was instantly besieged in Colchester by Constantius Chlorus, a vigilant Roman general.

The siege lasted for three years, and promised to be as long as that of Troy, when one day of truce the susceptible Roman happened to see Helena, old King Cole's beautiful golden-haired daughter, on the ramparts, and, exclaiming "Dea certe!" proposed immediate peace, so that he might marry Helena. King Cole joined hands on that bargain with the gallant officer, and the result was Constantine the Great, who was born at Colchester, and who deserves a statue there if ever man did. In 306 he was proclaimed emperor at York.

Those tormenting vermin of England, the Danes, when not foraging up the Blackwater, were fond of investigating the Colne, and there either opening oysters, or breaking open houses. They grew fond of the place, stuck close to the oysters, and made the place a stronghold, a fortified port, and a centre of departure for murder and plunder. But hard times came for them in 921, when Edward the Elder stormed the town, put the wild Danes to the sword, and re-peopled the place with stolid, honest West Saxons.

When grave men sat down to prepare the Doomsday Book, Colchester was still a thriving town. In 1218 (Henry the Third) Louis the Dauphin took the town on the Colne. In Edward the Third's reign Colchester sent five ships and a hundred and seventy seamen to the royal fleet, raised for the blockade of Calais, when our great king took the key of France, and his noble-hearted wife begged the lives of the six burgesses, as history has immortalised.

Then Colchester went on very quietly, feeding on her "weaver's beef" (sprats), till Lady Jane Grey's friends tried to seize the throne ; when the Colchester men stood out for gloomy Queen Mary, who, after her accession, complimented them by visiting the town. In Elizabeth's time the persecuted Flemings began to gather in the place to such an extent, that the jealous bailiffs and aldermen grew alarmed, and issued a command that no stranger should be permitted to reside within the precincts of Colchester, without their special consent.

But the crowning legend of the town, in the crow's eye, is the touching story of the death of those brave gentlemen, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, who, under Goring, Earl of Norwich, held Colchester, in 1648, against Fairfax and the Parliament. The deaths of these gallant, though mistaken, Cavalier officers happened thus : Cromwell had just smashed up the Scotch army of the Duke of Hamilton in the North. The Prince was with his fleet in the Downs, the poor King a prisoner in Carisbrook, the Earl of Holland had been taken near Kingston in an affair of cavalry, in which young Villiers was struck down, and Goring and Lord Capel, with the Kentish and Essex Royalist troops were shut up in Colchester. The Cavaliers there, having eaten nearly all their horses, and despairing of relief from the tardy Scotch army, sent to Fairfax to propose terms.

Fairfax would dismiss the common soldiers, but would grant no conditions to the officers and gentlemen. A day or two was spent in deliberation. The fiercer sort were for a brisk sally at all hazards, but they had too few horses, and those that were left were weak for want of sufficient food. Some were for dashing open a port, and for dying sword in hand ; but that was only to be butchered without chance of revenge, so at last the calmer counsel prevailed. They all surrendered, threw open the gates, and were at once led to the Town Hall, locked in and guarded. Presently a Puritan officer entered the room, and demanded a list of the prisoners'

names for the general. They gave it, and a guard presently returned for Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Bernard Gascoigne. The butchers had come into the crowded slaughter-house, and dragged out their selected victims. The men were brought before Fairfax, who (instigated as Clarendon thinks by the inflexible Ireton) told them that after so long and obstinate a defence, it was necessary, for the example of others, that the peace of the kingdom should be no more disturbed, and that some military justice should be done;—those three men must be presently put to death, and they were instantly led into a yard contiguous, where three files of musketeers were drawn up ready for the dreadful duty.

Sir Bernard Gascoigne was a gentleman of Florence, who had just English enough to explain that he required only pen, ink, and paper, so that he might write a letter to the Grand Duke to explain how he had lost his life, and who should inherit his estates. Sir Charles Lucas, the younger brother of a lord, and the heir to his title, had been bred up in the Low Countries, and had served in the cavalry. "He was very brave," says Clarendon, "and in the day of battle a gallant man to look upon and follow, but at all other times and places of a nature not to be lived with, of an ill understanding, of a rough and proud nature, which made him during the time of their being in Colchester more intolerable than the siege, or any fortune that threatened them. Yet they all desired to accompany him in his death." Lisle, compared with Lucas, was as summer to winter. Though fierce to lead and certain to be followed, he had "the softest and most gentle nature imaginable, loved all, and beloved of all, and without a capacity to have an enemy."

When the news of the cruel resolution reached the prisoners, the cavaliers were deeply moved, and Lord Capel instantly prevailed on an officer of their guard to carry a letter to Fairfax, entreating him either to forbear the execution, or that all of them, being equally guilty, might undergo the same sentence. The answer was only an order to the officer to carry out his order, reserving the Italian to the last. The three cavaliers were led forth into the castle courtyard. The men fired, and Lucas fell dead. Seeing that, Sir George Lisle ran to the body, embraced it, kissed the stern rugged face, then stood up, looked at the soldiers' faces, and thinking the men were too far off, told them to come nearer. One of the musketeers exclaimed:

"I'll warrant you, sir, we hit you."

Lisle replied, smiling:

"Friends, I have been nearer you when you have missed me."

Thereupon they all fired at him, and under that shower of fiery lead he fell instantly without uttering a word. Sir Barnard Gascoigne had already stripped off his doublet, and was expecting his turn, when the officer told him he had orders to carry him back to his friends, "for which mercy he cared not a whit." The council of war had feared that if his life was

taken, their friends or children for several generations would be in danger when travelling in Italy.

When, what Clarendon calls, "the bloody sacrifice," was completed, Fairfax and the chief officers went to the town hall to visit the surviving prisoners. The Puritan general treated the Earl of Norwich and Lord Capel courteously, apologised for the necessities of military justice, but said that the lives of all the rest were safe, and that they should be all well treated and disposed of as the Parliament directed. Lord Capel's high courage could not endure this; he bade the Puritans finish their work, and show them the same rigour; upon which there were, says Clarendon, "two or three sharp and bitter replies between him and Ireton, which cost Capel his life a few months after." While in the Tower Capel made a daring escape, but was soon recaptured and beheaded, together with the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Holland, on a scaffold before Westminster Hall.

The ruins of Colchester Castle still exist. It is stated to have been built by Edward the Elder. It stands on an eminence to the north of the high street. The splayed loop-holed windows and square flat buttresses show Norman work. On the south side courses of Roman tiles and herring-bone work intersect the clay-stone walls; the labels and groins are of Kentish rag or Purbeck stone, all dyed with weather stains and furred with coloured mosses. The western side, Mr. Walcott says, measures one hundred and sixty-six feet, the walls are thirty feet broad at the foundation, and are flanked with north-east and north-west towers. In the south-east bastion is a chapel, now a militia armoury. In the keep were two suites of apartments; the walls of the gateway are all that is left of the approach. The great south gate is still preserved, and there are still visible the grooves for the portcullis and the niche for the warden. There is an earth rampart round the Roman wall on the north and east sides. During the siege the choir of St. Botolph's was destroyed by Fairfax's cannon. St. Martin's Church and St. John's Abbey also suffered greatly, and all the fortifications of Colchester were subsequently dismantled. The Balkon gate and other portions of the old wall are full of round Roman tiles from old Camalodunum, and they gleam out red from among the glossy green ivy.

MR. LUFKIN AT A BULL FIGHT.

No—it weren't in our home paddock—neither were it in the Four Acre, which the fences are not all I could desire, and cattle, if restless, and out of yummer with flies and what not, has been know'd to work through. Don't let none o' you be startled. Now, then. 'Twere in Spain, activally in Spain! If hanybody had ventered to tell me that I, James Lufkin, should one day travel to Sarah Gosser, I should have felt inclined for to punch his head, as

chaffin' of me. Howsoever, the day come, I went, and this is how 'twas.

Imagine the astonishment of me and Mrs. Hel, when, one morning, as we was at breakfast, up comes the postman to the winder, and delivers in a letter bearin' a forren stamp—head of a young 'oman, hupsidedown, featurs good, but perky, hinscription, "Correyos Reales."

"Why, what d'ye make o' this?" I asks.

"Queen o' Spain's, I fancy," says the postman, with the indifference of his specious. "You're 'senior' Lufkin, I suppose?" he adds, grinnin'.

"Well, there a'nt no junior, yet," says I, with a wink at my missis, which colored, and poured out the tea.

Sure enough, the letter was addressed to "Señor Lufkin, Goodburn-close, Hogsmead, Lincoln, Hangletare." Hafter speklatin' nigh half-an-hour who it could possibly be from, we opened it. Who should it be, but Tom, my missis's cousin (you remember Tom?) which took us to see the Mrs. Davingpodge, and which we'd never set heyes on, since that curous hinvestigation.

Now, Tom is that sort o' movable chap, that, if you heerd of him yesterday at Broadstairs, you might reasonably expect a note from him to-morrow, from the himmediate vicinity of ancient Babylon. If he telegraphed from Chaney, that he was off to Japan, having took final leaf of England, my missis, without any hobservation, would get our spare bed ready for him, to-morrow. We wasn't surprised, therefore, to find that Tom had visisted Sarah Gosser.

Nor it wasn't so very strange, his writin' to me. Never since that evening at the Mrs. Davingpodge's, we had been, though we never met, the best o' friends. He came home to supper that night with us, and after we'd spoke of the hevents of the hevening, and I'd gone so far as to allow that the sudden hutting of a rope, under very peculiar and critical circumstances, might be a useful accomplishment to a certain class o' men, my wife went up to bed, and we had a deal o' friendly talk, Tom and me had, hover our pipes and toddy. We agreed that we had been very sad fellows, and sowed a mighty power o' wild oats, to be sure! (My wust enemies wouldn't accuse me of much in *that* line; but my hobject, you see, were to set poor Tom at his hease, and seem very penitent for what I hadn't done.) But that we felt it were now high time to steady down, and putt our shoulders to the wheel.

Tom was franker than ever I know'd him. He told me all his adventures, the fortins he'd been on the brink o' making, and the ill-luck that spiled so many of his hexlent designs, the theayter he'd built, with self-hacting scenery, lights, and box-keeping, which went to smash; the "Hevery 'Alf-hour Hexpress" which cum to grief; the gun which bust; and the Polish conspiracy, which was hanged in hinfancy.

He had now got in hand a wonderful Drayma, which, being took from the French, and put into Irish, with a railway smash, and a plunge down the Falls of Niagara, would make the

fortins of half the managers in Europe, besides helevating the drama almost out o' sight.

In return, I told him the luck I had had at Hogsmead, 'specially with beasts, and of the good bit o' money I had already put by. This pleased Tom very much. We shook hands a good many times, in the course o' the evening, and, I don't remember much else, 'cept that, next morning, I found that one o' my ten pun'-notes had turned into a I. O. U., bearin' the signature, shaky, but legible, "Thomas Ketcham Tirritup."

(I never mentioned that little hepisode to Mrs. Hel, and if ever this comes to be published, in the same singular manner as the former, I only begs that the printer'll leave out the last parrowgraft.)

Now, we comes back to Tom's letter.

"Twas wrote in the best o' sperrets, Tom statin' that he was already good 'alf-way up the 'ill o' fortune, which he'd been so long a-bungling at the foot of. Seeing how lucky I had been in the bullock line, he had gone in for a branch of the same, and was already half-proprietor of one o' the very finest establishments in Sarah Gosser. Such were the popilarity of the stock—'specially small but hactive bulls, supplied from the grazing farms of Ramirez Vermijo and Tirritup—that it was sometimes hard to make room for all that came to bid. They did a little in horses, too, but weren't so lucky as in o'ther. It seems bulls didn't agree with 'em. At all events, the mortality in the stable was very serious, and Tom hinted that a consignment of animals from England—'specially of cab'-osses as had served their four or five year, and had anything the matter—exceptin' glanders—would be very acceptable. Hoddly enough (added Tom) they was in a position to give five shillings more for a blind oss, than one as saw.

"Well, Jem, I never!" put in my wife. "That is a queer fancy."

"The work," Tom adds, "is 'hexceptional.'"

"What's that, Hel?"

"Mill work," says I (I always likes to make ready answer)—"grinding bones, or something o' that kind. It's depressing to a thinkin' 'oss to be walking round and round, and seeing what his own bones is gradually workin' to."

"Do 'osses think?" asks my wife.

"What d'ye suppose their brains is doing all day long, in the stable?" I asks. Then, before she'd time to ask me what I thought they was doing, I reads on.

"With *your* experience, an' a little capital, I could dewelope the business o' Ramirez Vermijo and Tirritup to a hextent hundreamed of in the wildest wisions o' avarice. Hafter that, I'll sit down a contented man."

"Poor Tom!" says Mrs. Hel, visibly effected; "he's not a bad fellow, you see."

"You remember our conversation," I continued, reading, "after the sworry, shay Davingpodge Brothers, and how we agreed that, having now, both on us, had our swing and en'jyed our little games—"

"Hey-day!" says Mrs. Hel, sharp; "read that again. What ever does he mean by that?—*your little games—your litt—*"

"Spose he illudes to my hentering my old mare for the steeplechase," I answers, hastily. "But, you know, it didn't come off. So—so—Ha . . . Now," Tom goes on, "if you and cousin Matty'll pop on your seven-league boots, and step across to Sarah Gosser, I can promise you a 'arty welcome, hexlent wine, and universal ciwility, which, if it don't mean much, hexpresses a deal. And," concluded Tom, "as we partic'larly want your opinion of a black Handalusian bull, with short sharp 'orns, we hope you'll not disappoint us, but'll come next week. Your affectionate, Tom K. Tirritup. P.S. Ramirez Vermijo kisses my cousin's hand." The deuce he does! He must have a pretty long neck," says I, as I folded up the letter, thoughtfully, and put it in my pocket, keeping out, however, a specious of map, meant to show us the way, with many ins and outs, and roads and names; but with Hogsmead and Sarah Gosser wrote very large, and so nigh together that it seemed quite sing'lar they'd hitherto know'd so little of each other.

There was a pause, after which,

"If we'd wanted *very* much to go, Hel," says my wife, timidly, "twould have been just the only time—wouldn't it, now?"

"Twould have cost a pot o' money," says I, "all for to see a Handalusian bull. Twould have been cheaper to send him to *me*."

"So it would, my dear. Just like Tom, but—"

"Fine open weather, ain't it, Mrs. Hel?" says I, to change the subject and diwert her mind.

"Wery fine—'specially for them as happens to be travellin' by land or by water. They not only has the pleasure, but'll be prayed for," says my wife, softly.

"They has *expenses*, Mrs. Hel," I thought it my duty to say.

"Wery true," she says, with a sigh. "By the by, Jem, what ever does Tom, mean by saying that you and he had 'had your sw—'?"

"And so you'd rally like to cross the salt seas, dear?" says I, pinching her ear.

"Yes, I would, no matter *how* salt they was," said my wife, stoutly. "But, Jem—'little games'? If—"

"Then, I tell you what—you shall," hainterupted I. "So go and clap on your wust bonnet."

O' course I was only joking about the bonnet, for it took us several days to prepare. I, for my part, wanted to say nothing about it, it not being favourable for things in general, to be know'd that the master's going far away. But my wife was proud of this tremenjous journey, and it soon got wind. We was looked at with hainterest and astonishment. Compliments, likewise commissions, came pouring down upon us. Folks seemed to think that Spain produced everything other countries didn't. But we shortened it by declining to bring back anything but liquorice, which, packing close, and

being very likely to dissolve on the way, we cheerfully hundertook to any amount.

To be sure, going to Spain is not a hevery-day affair; still, there was no call for the club givin' me a farewell dinner at the Salutation. Have it, however, they *would*. All I stipulated for was, that there was to be no speeches—that it were not to be called a "dinner," but a convivial repast, and that Stephen Dumbush, who had never been heerd to utter anything beyond a grunt, in the memory of man, was to be in the chair. There were to be no formality, nor nothin' stronger than rum-punch.

When the day come, though nothin' was *said* about any dinner, the coincidences as happened wos curios in the hextreme. Everybody seemed to have particular business at Hogsmead—as might keep them out till bed-time. Neighbour Burdock, Stephen Dumbush, and old Bullwinkle—rode in together. Singlerly, everybody'd hordered dinner at the same hour—half-past four! There was a table at the Salutation, haccidentally laid for twenty-five, just the number as chanced to meet! The big chair, at the top, 'appened to be hooccupied by Mr. Dumbush. Into the chair on his right hand, I permiscuously dropped, and we found ourselves dining sumptuously, and makin' a din you might have heard at Lincoln!

Honly distant illusions was at first made to our journey.—"Our neighbour's brief absence"—"Lufkin's hainteresting project"—"Jem's little forrin start," etc. Hafterwards as we warmed up, they was more plain.

George Burdock remarked that, o' course, he wasn't going to make a speech, but he *did* see a gentleman present which to drink a cordial health to—and his wife—wouldn't do no harm to anybody. The party he had in his heye was going to a distant land, of which wery little was generally know'd, except that there was hisurrections twice a week, and a down right rebellion hevery 'alf year. It was hard to get at, but he believed that, when a man giv' his mind to it, and arrived, there was good cattle—'specially bulls—and he hoped that the wisit of Mr. Lufkin would lead to such a cordial hainterchange of beasts, as would be creditable to both countries. With the consent of the chair (Mr. Dumbush nodded) he would give the health of Mr. and Mrs. Lufkin, of Goodburn Close.

Mr. Stonedyke, though mindful of the general understanding that there was to be no speeches, could not deny himself the pleasure of seconding that proposal, hadding that, since their respected neighbour had already distinguished himself as a author—in regard to sperretas—the public would be nat'rally impatient for his views with respect to the crossin' o' red Herefords with the short-horned northern stock.

Mr. Bullwinkle would only say one word. Mention had been made of Spanish bulls. For John Bull to have to be taught by a Spaniard what a bull was, almost amounted to an Irish one. He thought that the only advantage of Spanish stock over our'n, was an hincreased inclination to fight, and tempers more heasily hagravated.

Young Tom Thicknesse (which an't wery

bright) wished to ask one question. He believed as Spain led through France. He read, at school that the French kep' their accounts in franks and sows. Now, for travellers, like Mr. Lufkin, to carry sows—”

Tom was stopped by a sing'ler incident. Stephen Dumbush, which had hitherto done his duty so admirably, in the chair, that you needn't have know'd he was present, and hadn't uttered a voluntary word since he was married—nigh twenty years ago—suddenly gets up! A convulsion o' nature wouldn't have surprised us more. He lays down his pipe, as though he shouldn't want it again for half an hour—he looks slowly round—his eyes goggle—he opens his mouth. Then he shuts it again—and sits down. Whether his courage failed him—whether he thought he'd made a speech, and hadn't—or whether he was only countin' noses, with a view to the bill—were never know'd, to this day!

After recovering a little from the disappointment Stephen had giv' us, everybody drunk my health and Mrs. Hel's, and I returned thanks, merely observing that I would follow the hexlent example set me, and hadd nothing—or less. True, I were about to wist Sarah Gosser, and my friend Rummyres Frummagio had already kissed my wife's 'and—by post, which was Spanish for 'how-d'ye-do? Wery glad to see you.' If the presence of a blunt Englishman could go any ways to 'eal any little soreness that might still exist on the score of the Harmada, I should be wery glad, and if I found their stock hinferior to ours, gladder still. Mr. Stonedyke need not hexpect hanything from my pen. Sheep, not hink, filled my pens! My letter concernin' the sperrets was a privileged communication. It was addressed to a humble country-print, and, lo and be'old! it comes out in a very different paper, conducted by a gentleman which could have know'd nothing of me—unless it might have been at the Tugmorden Hagricultural, as second-silver in boarpigs, and igh commendation in turnips. My neighbour Bullwinkle might be heasy. Stiffkits of character should be required, with hevery bull I purchased. Sweetness and forbearingness of disposition, hindispensable. As regards the question of Mr. Thicknesse, I had ascertained that, although sows were freely used in small commercial transactions, it was not necessary to hexport your whole stock, there being a coin of similar name, which might be used, instead. In conclusion, I thanked them all 'eartily, and moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Dumbush, for his hable silence in the chair.

Folks going to France a'most hevery day—I needn't say more than that we found heverybody wery polite, and partial to franks—and it were only when we got to a place, hoddily called “Buy on,” and hentered Spain, that our troubles began. We had just cut in for one of those half-yearly rebellions I have mentioned. This, however, was more serious than common. The queen had bolted for good and all, without 'aving 'ad time to put on her crown. That was why they'd turned her topsy-turvy on my letter. Great hexcitement was visible, 'specially when

we stopped to dine, and was only given three minutes and a half. Heverybody was talkin' of “freedom” and “liberty”—and wery free they was—and great liberties took with Mrs. Hel's baggage—searching heverything, even to shaking out her chemises. I see them busy over a bundle of her curlpapers (which was old farm-accounts of mine) and there was a power of talking and comparing, before they was hultimately put back. A gentleman as spoke English told me they was suspected of being “Carlist dockyments.”

Heverything, as we approached Sairey Gosser, seemed to get dearer and dearer, which, the same gent assured us, was another glorious sign o' freedom.

At Sairey Gosser, Tom Tirritup met us at the station, stopped a ginal fight for our luggage, and, elbowing right and left, got us safely away to a very fine hotel—the “Hori-ental.” Our coachman, bein' free, wanted ten franks, to which request Tom merely replied, “Caramba!” and gave him two. We had a hexlent supper, and Tom said he had selected that hotel for us, because the waiters, though Spanish, spoke Italian, which was a great convenience and satisfaction!

My wife, being tired, went to bed, when Tom perjuiced some very choice tobacco, smuggled (through a hanicable arrangement with a gentleman at the Custom-house) by Ramirez Vermijo, and opened his budget. There was to be a very great cattle show on the morrow, patronised by the provisional government, in horder to amuse the people while they was making choice among the fifteen gentlemen who had kindly offered to be king. With regard to the black Handalusian bull I had chiefly come to see, Tom reported that he was in the best of health, and—not having been fed for two days—would be hactive and hirritable on the morrow, and so be seen to the greater advantage.

This sounded hodd; but, not to show ignorance, I honly nodded, and made a secret resolution not to go near that noble hanimal till he had dined.

Tom ended a long discourse on the hinteresting character of Spanish bulls, with the remark that, if he could honly command the sum of one thousand pounds, he distinctly saw his way to making it twenty. At this point of the conversation, however, I got wery sleepy, and we presently separated for the night.

Sairey Gosser is the bawlingest town I never know'd. Shouting and singing went on till half-past three. Then there was quiet for half an hour; after which began a jingling of bells up and down the streets, stopping at different houses. This, they told us afterwards, meant hasses' milk, which, at four in the morning, must have been a very pleasant and inwigorating tipple.

Heverything was alive the next morning, for the cattle show was to open at twelve o'clock, and all Sairey Gosser, women-folks and all, was going. Tom Tirritup came to breakfast, and brought a request from Ramirez Vermijo that I would place him (Ramirez V.)

at the feet of Mrs. Hel; but, me hobjecting, Tom explained that it was honly another form o' compliment.

Rayther to my surprise, Tom did not wish Mrs. Hel to accompany us, stating that, owing to the huneven temper of bulls, and to hosses gittin' in the way, haccidents of a serious natur' were not unusual. My missis, however, pinted out that she had not come all that way to be left alone; also that her nerves was good, and that, by taking with her some salts and sticking-plaster, she might be very useful in case of need. So Tom called a coach, and off we went.

The streets leading to the show was one tremenjous jam. Such a lot of carriage company I never see! Such a floating o' weils and fluttering o' fans! Such a capering of hosses and whiffing of paper cigars! Such ginal hexcitement as must have been very gratifying to the feelins of the stock we was coming to examine, if they could honly have know'd it in time!

At last we entered the building, and was placed in what Tom said were hexlent seats, reserved for us by Ramirez Vermijo. But wheer was the pens? There wasn't a livin' creature wisible, honly about ten thousand people, hoccupying seats or walking about in a sanded harea below. Tom, however, explained that the beasts was hexhibited one at a time; and, on my remarking that, unless I was allowed to feel and closely hinspect the various animals, I couldn't offer an opinion as was worth anything. Tom merely rejoined, that both he and Ramirez Vermijo would take it as a favour that I should do so, as ofthen as I saw fit.

Hall on a sudden, a gate was flung open below. The people as was walking about himmediately got over the double rails that went round the place, and took their seats. Then a percession hentered the harea. Fust came four trumpeters, in beautiful hold-fashioned dresses, with flags 'anging to their hinstruments; then a gent in a very tight rich dress, blue and gold, 'aving a sword in his right hand, and hover his left arm a large red silk 'ankerchief. ("The mattydoor," said Tom, in my ear. "Ho," says I, winking.) Hafter the mattydoor (which was applauded, and bowed back) come six men on horseback—if 'osses they might be called—for I wouldn't have given ten pound for the lot. The men was all padded down their right sides, as if they'd broke their right ribs, including the thigh and leg, and was in splints, according, and carried pikes hornamented with ribbins. ("Pickadoors," whispered Tom. "O, doos they," says I.) Next their come eight or ten men in smart jackets, sashes, and knee-breeches, with little spikes in their hands, likewise with ribbins; and, lastly, a string o' ten mules, 'arnessed, but not droring anything, and a'most covered with silver and ribbins. It was altogether a very pretty sight, and Mrs. Hel applaused 'earthily.

When they had marched all round the circle, a gent in a bright uniform, very well mounted,

pranced into the ring, stopped in front of the largest box, made a speech in Spanish, and 'eld out his hat, into which a gentleman, which, Tom said, was the governor, threw a big key, hornamented with the everlasting ribbins. This the mounted gent 'anded to an attendant on foot, who went and hopened another door, and popped be'ind it, while everybody else got out of the way as quickly as they could.

Pwish!—Wot a bound!—There was a cloud of sand and dust, which dispersed, and showed a bull—hash-grey in color, with short but sharp horns, pinting well forrad, on each side of a head that seemed good half a yard across, and covered with short thick curling 'air. His eyes glowed like danger-signals on a railway-line—he lashed hisself with his tail, and tore deep trenches in the sile, as if he was diggin' a grave for the fust as should cross his way!

Mrs. Hel and me was still admiring that finely-dewveloped beast, when two of the men in splints, mounted on the valuable hosses, rode right into the ring, hopposite the bull, and stood stock still, with their pikes pinting towards him. At fust, he didn't notice them, being hinterested in the ladies' fans, which fluttered like a thousand pigeons. I had just time to whisper, "Bless my soul, Tom, do they want to haggravate him?" and Tom to answer, coolly, "Shouldn't wonder," when—broosh!—the bull was upon the nearest! The man caught him in the shoulder with his pike, but the horse, seemingly groggy, reeled so that I thought both was over. There was a bust of applause, in the midst of which my wife huttered a little shriek—and turned pale.

"The blood! The blood! The poor dumb creeter! why does they provoke him then?"

"Hush, hush, my dear cousin!" said Tom, 'astily. "It don't go in fur. See how the hother ladies enjoys it?"

And, be ashamed to them, so they did!

By this time the bull had wriggled hisself off the pike, and, mad with pain and hanger, made a furious dash at the second horseman, which received him in the same way.

"Tom, Tom, do you call this a cattle show?" said my wife, faintly. "I call it a cruel, wicked, wanton—"

"Well, it brings out their best qualities, you see," says Tom, lighting a cigarette; "we judges o' the soundness o' the stock by the way they bears theirselves under trying circumstances—Ha!—Bravo, Toro!"

"Bravo, Toro!" shouted thousands o' voices.

The bull, shaking hisself clear, had charged like lightning on the man's undefended side. There lay on the ground a shapeless heap, composed of man and horse, a mass of blood, and, more shocking still, the entrails of the fallen quadruped, smoking on the sand.

"Take me out, Hel," gasped my wife, "or I shall die!"

Tom and I removed her quickly into the air, and, the faintness passing, put her into a carriage. I was stepping in, too, but the good soul whispered me that it would 'ardly be the right thing to leave Tom alone. So, hafter

seeing her comfortably hoff, back I went with Tom.

There was more hexcitement than never. You'll 'ardly believe it—but, in that short time, the bull had killed three more hosses, and hinjured a man—and was raging about the enclosure, shaking the blood in showers from his horns and head. Many of the ladies was half standing, waving their fans, and hurrying like the men. For myself, wexed as I was at the trick Tom had played us, I hown I was not free from the prevailing hexcitement—so, speaking coldly, I says:

" Wotever may be my private opinion of your *cattle show*—Mr. Tirritup—I consider that, bein' here, it is my dooty to see it hout—if honly in the hope that something may occur to halter my present impression."

" All right, old fellow," says Tom. " See!"

Just at that moment, a trumpet sounded, and several of the men with the ribbined spikes ran into the enclosure, and began dancing about the bull, teasing and hirritating him, leaving their spikes fixed in his neck; but halways saving their own skins in a wonderful way.

" They know, you see," says Tom, " by the prick of his ear, which side he's goin' to charge, and sticks him on the t'other."

At last, one man brought a chair, and sat hisself down in it as coolly as if he was goin' to have a quiet chat with the bull. He had in each hand a spike, to which was fastened a sort of cracker. Down goes the bull's tremenjous head, and he rushes at the sitting man. Hup goes the chair, twenty feet in the hair; but the man stands by, laughing, and on each side of the poor beast's head are stuck the spikes, spattering fire! There was more tricks and teasing, such as 'angin' their 'ats on the bull's horns, hexcetera, but the hanimal got tired o' fighting nothing, and there was a pause, when the trumpet sounded again, heverybody bolted, and henter the mattydoor, glistening like a 'arlequin. There was a roar of applause.

" 'Hel Tato' is deservedly pop'lar," remarked Tom, " 'aving polished off his four hundred bulls with only one mistake."

" 'Hel Tato' walks straight towards the bull, which glares at him a moment with his red eyes, then, using all his remaining strength, makes a furious, stumbling charge. There's the whish of a scarlet mantle—the glitter of a sword—a cloud of dust, and the beast is on his knees and broad forehead, at the feet of "Hel Tato," dead. 'Twas the only manly stroke he had received, and was rewarded with a 'urricane of applause, 'andfuls of money, and cigars enough to fill a barrow to the brim. Three mules then come dashing in at full gallop, was hitched to the bull, and whirled him off, as if he had been made o' pasteboard! Hafter that, the place was put to rights, the ladies ate

oranges, and hother bulls was perjuiced. But I had had enough of Rammyres Vermijo, and Tom laughed, and said, so had *he*.

We walks away silent, when presently Tom—whose cigarette didn't seem to draw kindly—looks sideways at me, and says:

" You're disappointed, Lufkin!"

" Disappointed!" I bust out. " Say, hindignant. Hadd, ashamed! I've given countenance to a hexhibition as hatrocious as it is cowardly. I've dishonoured the name and character of the British farmer. 'Owever I shall 'old up my 'ead again, at the Salutation, I don't know. I shall blush to look my hown bulls in the face—when I think of the hend o' this one! You bring him up, from his free pastures—the brave, hunsuspectin' beast, and the use you make of his might and strength—his noble lines—his splendid development of limb and muscle—his glorious crest—hismore than manly courage—is to turn him into a railed prison, theer to be prodded with pikes, scorched with fireworks, bullied, baited, and bewildered, until, blind and weak with loss of blood, he can be safely cut down by that mixture o' the monkey and the murderer you call a 'mattydoor'! Aye, Tom, if the beast could speak, that would be *his* wersion o' the sport. Hout upon such sport! It hasn't even the merit of being dangerous. Between your harmour, hosses, cloaks, squibs, noise, and numbers, its fifty to one agin the single hanimal, before never he henters the ring.

" And, if it's cruel to the bulls, it's worse for the hosses. They can't defend theirselves, and their riders, padded as they are, think honly of their own carcases.*

" And if it's cruel to the hosses—oh Tom, Tom, it's worst cruelty of all to the women! Yes, them that flutters and fidgets most, in that 'orrible joy, bears deadliest witness against man's misleading. Hour duty is, and ever was, to restrain that spirit, heager, curious, hexcitable, that seems the 'eritage of the weak but dear companion God has given us. Is it in this Christian age and land, that we are found doing our hutmost to encourage it? No, Tom, my boy, instead of fostering in her the savage thirst of blood, show her those inevitable sufferings with which her gentle heart can sympathise, and which her tender hand can soothe. As for your hosses, instead of tearing out their hinsides, fill 'em with 'olesome food. And as for your beef, when it can't fulfil no nobler hend, why, cook it like a man, and hask *me* to dinner!"

* Mr. Lufkin's comment—correct in the main—has found an honourable exception in the person of Calderon, at present the first picador in Spain. This man occasionally rides an old white horse, perfectly blind, which he has succeeded in bringing in safety, almost without a scratch, from thirty desperate encounters. By the laws of the bull-ring, a horse that escapes in safety, from three conflicts, becomes the property of the rider.

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